

ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

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AND BOOK AND RECORD REVIEWS

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Journal of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR

The Editor's Notebook

THE three months since our last issue have seen an interchange of visitors with the USSR that gladdens the heart. A list of international conferences held this summer in Moscow alone shows the range of contacts being established: the 12th International Congress of Sport Medicine; the meeting of the council of the International Geophysical Year; the Congress of the International Astronomical Union; the Congress of the International Union of Architects; the International Conference of Slavists; the Conference of the International Scientific Film Association.

Much as we would like to, we could not possibly cover all this in one issue of the *ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL*. In this issue we have brought together the impressions of some of this summer's visitors, together with other items that we hope will contribute to the exchange of views between the writers and artists of both countries.

Common Ground

IN no field probably is this exchange less developed than in that of art. Contact has been slight. The public are not acquainted with original Russian work; and most of the reproductions available of Russian and Soviet painting do not do justice to the artists.

There is a fundamental divergence between Soviet artists and abstract painters, but between western realists and their Soviet colleagues there is much common ground. This point is brought home by reactions to this year's Venice Biennale. We were struck, for example, by the correspondence in the views expressed by John Berger in the *New Statesman* and by Soviet sculptor Y. Vuchetich (author of the Soviet war memorial in Berlin) in *Izvestia*.

Both were indignant at the way abstract painting dominated this year's show. Vuchetich's comments were less pungent than Berger's "image of muck, of garbage"; his main reaction was "a feeling of increasing depression" and of disgust. But both found things to admire. Berger felt there were a dozen "who encouragingly remind us that art is independent to exactly the same degree as it discloses reality" and found hope in the Egyptian pavilion. Vuchetich recorded that "realism lives and carves a path for itself", and found pleasure, for example, in the Australian pavilion.

On Vuchetich the Soviet pavilion made a forceful impression "against the back-

ground of impressionist daubery". He recorded with pride that some visitors said that only here in the Biennale did they find genuine art. Berger, too, was impressed. "By comparison", he wrote, "the Soviet pavilion, which is full of old-style Stalinist works, is rich and various and ingenious. Admittedly the richness is literary, and visually the Russian paintings are very sentimental; admittedly they are painted with clichés distributed by bureaucrats. But if one has to choose between the unimaginativeness of bureaucrats there and the fantasies of the sick . . . ?"

As we go to press the exhibition of Russian art is being opened at the Royal Academy. It is to be hoped that by broadening acquaintance with Soviet painting it will deepen understanding and extend the common ground between the artists of both countries.

Graphic Art

THE exhibition of Soviet graphic art sponsored by SCR, and now touring galleries in the provinces, has made a modest contribution towards this. It has evoked thoughtful comments from critics and the public, as in this piece from the northern edition of the *Manchester Guardian* (1.10.58) about the exhibition's visit to Sunderland:

"It has been common to decry the few examples of contemporary Russian art that have come our way as out-dated anecdotal work, slavishly following the party line. Kobuladze's enormous colour etchings of industrial subjects and Pakhomov's large lithographed hymns to the glories of the restoration of Leningrad may have some of these faults. The colour lino-cuts of Vetrogonsky himself would also seem to have ventured no farther forward in time than 'The Yellow Book'. But when left to work in line, and in monochrome, these Russian artists excel themselves, especially in the field of portraiture. The monumental portrait heads by Gunter Riendorf and the sensitively etched child studies of Aino Bakh present their own case, and so in lighter mood do the satirical studies on a musical theme by Leonid Soifetis of 'Krokodil'.

"The exhibition undoubtedly serves its purpose. Forgetting our suspicions and prejudices, we accept these artists as friendly folk: people whom we would like to meet in the flesh; and in the case of Edward Einmann—and especially his sanguine portrait of a 'Girl from Slovakia'—a man whose art we can covet."

Congratulations

THE Moscow Art Theatre has just celebrated its 60th anniversary. We heartily congratulate all our friends in the company and wish them many more years of success.

Congratulations and good wishes also to the company of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon, on their visit to Moscow and Leningrad. A successful tour is assured; it will undoubtedly deepen Soviet understanding and love of Shakespeare and be a landmark in Anglo-Soviet exchanges.

Theatre Workers in Conference

A MAJOR event in Soviet theatrical life has been the conference of actors, producers and playwrights held in Moscow in early October. Discussion turned on a general report by the Minister of Culture, and on the problems of contemporaneity. Attention was focused on two important weaknesses of present-day Soviet theatre: the relation between theatres and playwrights, and the training of producers. Summing it up, *Pravda* wrote: "The problem of training cadres of producers is acute. It is a cause for anxiety that the specific creative style of a producer is often not distinct. The task before theatrical schools is to bring up talented reinforcements possessing great experience of life in general and of their profession."

The time was ripe, *Pravda* also said, to tackle a number of organisational problems of the theatre, particularly those of introducing greater flexibility in the formation of new companies and drawing in new talent.

Theatre for Students

A STEP in this direction has been the opening of a theatre for young actors where the theatrical schools can present their passing-out plays in the best conditions. Following Moscow's example, a similar theatre is being opened in Kiev.

The Moscow theatre has taken over the former premises of the Gypsy Theatre. An art council headed by Mr. V. S. Toporkov, whose article on Stanislavsky at rehearsal was published in our last issue, has been put in charge. Though the theatre is formally attached to the State Theatrical Institute, other schools will use it, and the best productions of provincial schools will also be staged there. The first programmes included two plays each by students of the State Institute, the Art Theatre School, the Shchepkin School and the Shchukin School. Among them are two plays by Terence Rattigan and Mona Brand.

Short Ballets Wanted

YVETTE CHAUVIRE'S triumphs in Moscow and London this summer make us regret that the Royal Ballet has still not been to Moscow.

The Moscow visit of the Paris Opera ballet came in the middle of a nation-wide review of Soviet ballet schools, and a competition for new ballets and ideas for ballets. It seems to have added point to the demand for more short ballets and dances suitable for concerts and ballet evenings. Prof. Zakharov, the choreographer, was interested by the French *divertissements*. And Moscow ballerina Maria Bogolyubskaya wrote that Soviet dancers had something to learn from Paris, saying, "If, in addition to major productions, our ballet produced dance suites based on the music of Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Khachaturyan, this would provide opportunities for a wider display of the talents of Soviet dancers and choreographers."

Ballet and Opera Tours

INTOURIST is offering a number of tours this winter that look exceedingly attractive for ballet and opera lovers. You can take your choice between a short trip to Leningrad and a twelve-day round tour of Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev with a different ballet or opera every night by five opera houses and ballet companies. The programme includes *Romeo and Juliet*, *Prince Igor*, *Swan Lake* and *Seven Beauties*. Prices for the stay in the USSR are reasonable, even cheap for what is offered. But there remains, for those with the time and opportunity to go, the cost of travel to and from Leningrad or Moscow. When one starts to reckon the price of an air or rail ticket one realises how far away these great musical and ballet centres are.

Film Exchanges

WE hope that progress will soon be made in effecting a real exchange of Soviet and British films. The arrangements for US-Soviet exchanges made within the terms of the Soviet-American cultural agreement underline the desirability of something similar here. Ten American films (including *The Great Caruso*, *Marty*, *The Old Man and the Sea* and *Oklahoma*) will be exchanged in 1959 for seven Soviet films (which will include *The Cranes Are Flying*, *Swan Lake*, *The Idiot* and *The Captain's Daughter*).

Another developing field of film exchange is that of co-productions. Studio plans for the next three years include arrangements for forty co-productions with foreign companies, thirteen by Mosfilm and the Gorky Film Studios and more than twenty by republican studios.

Dostoevsky and Malraux

AS one would expect, studies of Dostoevsky occupied a prominent place in the proceedings of the Conference of Slavists. Four papers about his work were read and there was a lively debate. Normally little more would be heard of them, except among scholars; but one—entitled "Dostoevsky and Malraux" and delivered by the

American Slavist Prof. Mathewson—has provoked a spirited rejoinder in *Pravda* from V. Ermilov, the Soviet biographer of Dostoevsky.

The claim that Malraux is a faithful disciple of Dostoevsky, made by Mathewson and Malraux himself, is more than Ermilov can stand. How can anyone be called a follower of Dostoevsky, he asks, if he has adopted an amoral, anti-humanist standpoint like Malraux? To Ermilov, "to represent Dostoevsky without his defence of human personality against social oppression and without his protest against the social system which causes the sufferings of millions of people like Marmeladov; to represent Dostoevsky without his wrath and aversion towards that social system under which, as he put it in his *Winter Notes of Summer Impressions*, people fall into two categories, those to whom any liberties are allowed and those with whom any liberties are allowed; to represent Dostoevsky without his underlying theme, without protest against capitalism" is tantamount to denying his essence.

Ermilov also finds the Nietzschean tendencies in Malraux mentioned by Mathewson quite foreign to Dostoevsky. "Dostoevsky struggled hard against the tyrannical idea of the superman. This idea was identified in his mind with Napoleonism. In his art Napoleon embodies the principle that 'everything is permissible'."

"Soviet literary criticism", Ermilov concludes his protest, "studies the contradictory art of Dostoevsky objectively, revealing both the positive and reactionary aspects of the great writer's work. But when Dostoevsky is dragged into the black cause of disparaging humanism, we say *no!* And we are sure that this will be said by all who value Russian literature and humanist traditions."

Studying Russian

THE recent correspondence in *The Times* brought out some of the difficulties in the way of studying this important language. In London, for example, it is very difficult, if not impossible, for a girl to get tuition at school to the "O" Level of the GCE, let alone to Advanced level. Shortage of teachers is the reason given for the few schools providing Russian; and the small number studying Russian at school is a contributing reason to the shortage of teachers.

The distribution of languages among candidates for the GCE examinations seems to bear no relation to the utility of the languages in after-life; there seem to be obstacles in the way of science students learning even German, let alone Russian. The cultural value of non-Romance languages seems also to be underestimated.

The Times felt the correspondence merited a leader, justly entitled "A Language Worth Knowing". The arguments

in favour of wider teaching of Russian are not limited to the utilitarian plea that our scientists should know more about Soviet science. Knowledge of Russian opens up a rich culture that, in spite of the efforts of translators, is only partially known and appreciated in this country. One has only to consider the books available on Russian music, for example, to realise how little even our musicologists know of Russian opera.

Apart from its cultural value, Russian has all the pedagogic virtues as a discipline usually cited in favour of Latin. This point was well brought out not long ago in the *New Scientist*.

Given the present situation in the schools, the efforts of university departments are bound to be circumscribed. Evening institutes, extra-mural classes and other after-work facilities for studying Russian thus have a greater importance than do facilities for many other languages. There are evening institutes with willing students—their difficulty is in finding teachers. Provincial readers who can teach Russian would be rendering a great service if they got in touch (if they are not already) with their local education authorities.

Scientific Imagination

WE were a little puzzled by the comment of a scientific journalist on the anniversary of the first sputnik that this Soviet success was due rather to technical competence than to scientific imagination. Is this a new form of that chronic underestimation of Soviet achievement which it was thought was ended when Sputnik I went into orbit?

Automation

THE Soviet exhibit at the Fourth International Automation Exposition, held in New York at the beginning of June, has a bearing here. The comment about competence and imagination may spring from different approaches in the wider field of automation. Commenting on the Soviet exhibits the American magazine *Instruments and Automation* noted that the similarity between Russian and American instruments ended in their external appearance. "The guts of the instruments revealed unique engineering and design, emphasizing ruggedness and reliability and the best of modern engineering practice." One of the main differences was the less extensive use in the USSR of electronic miniatures "although such instruments are available". The general impression, however, was that the two countries were about level in automation technique and that while the USA had "a greater variety in and more differences in design of instruments", the "level of utilisation of instruments seems to be about the same in an equivalent industrial process or laboratory". (*Instruments and Automation*, 7, 1958.)

AFTERTHOUGHTS ON A MUSICAL ODYSSEY

Dennis Gray Stoll

The author of this travelogue is a composer, lives in South Wales, visited the USSR on business before the war and on pleasure in the summer of 1958. How he went and what he did are described below.

THIS summer my wife and I happened to go to Russia by car—a Bedford Dormobile, stuffed with our luggage, my wife's twin sister and brother-in-law and, most important of all, a large red box containing my full scores and orchestral parts.

At the Polish border a charming lady customs official opened the car door, saw our heap of possessions, and asked if we were moving. My wife said, "No. It's just my husband's music. He's a composer." It was a magic word, much to the chagrin of my brother-in-law, who is an astronomer.

The red box, painted boldly with our name in both Roman and Russian capitals, was a symbol of a composer's private revolution—a revolution against the *Elijah-Messiah* world that makes many a worthy musician rage. It was also more than a symbol: a good-natured gesture to show that the owners of the box came to the USSR with open and unprejudiced minds.

We had been warned by a number of well-meaning friends that we would never be allowed to cross the Soviet border: the most we could expect was to be escorted by an armed guard along the shortest route to Siberia! The reality was blissfully different. At the Soviet border we were received in a comfortable house by kind Intourist guides who apologetically explained that, since we had made no reservations, we would have to proceed along the main road to Moscow without their company and assistance. And so we drove the 1,053 kilometres from Brest to Moscow minus the guide-interpreter who, according to our anxious friends who have not been to the Soviet Union, never lets a foreigner out of his sight.

We were rescued from the predicament of a burst tyre and a lost jack by a lorry driver and two husky young peasant boys who, through sheer skill and physical fitness, undid nuts that had been put on by a machine turner. We ate delicious meals that would have cost a fortune in Soho, in lorry drivers' restaurants where brothers of the road grasped our hands in friendly greeting.

Travel-weary but happy, we arrived at Moscow's thirty-storey Ukraine Hotel. It must have reminded my brother-in-law of the sky-scrapers of New York, for he suddenly felt a strong desire to disown our red box.

"That's his over there", he muttered to the porter. "He's a crazy composer."

A composer! The word reacted on the listening ears of half a dozen modest Moscow maidens in much the same way as the whispered intimation "That's Elvis Presley!" would have done in "God's own country".

"Is your husband really a composer?" they asked my wife. And they stared at me with the rapt adoration which previously I had only seen on the faces of Fra Angelico angels.

In no time I had been introduced to a senior guide, Alexandra, the wife of the first cellist of the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra, who happened to be acting as an interpreter for the Astronomical Union Conference that my brother-in-law was attending.

While enjoying the abundant meals and sight-seeing that go with a delegation to Russia, which on this occasion included a splendid party inside the Kremlin itself, we found time to get down to the serious and stimulating business of hearing Soviet music and meeting Soviet musicians.

The most obvious quality about Soviet orchestras is their rhythmic sense. You don't have to listen to the Leningrad Philharmonic under Mravinsky to appreciate that they have not merely mastered but embodied the essence of rhythm. Almost any odd little hotel band playing a gopak can effectively illustrate the phenomenon of pressing on the rhythm from within.

The gift of rhythm, unless allied to other sensitive and deeper qualities, could make for a certain brittle brilliance in performance. But in the field of sensitive understanding and interpretation of a score—especially a Russian score—few can hold a candle to the Russians. The sweeping and rich sounds of the Bolshoi Theatre strings, the expressive sonorities of a Soviet choir, the warm tone of a violinist like Igor Bezrodny—all these are intensely musical experiences.

Tchaikovsky, Borodin, Shostakovich—it is for a special reason that these names, and a dozen other Russian ones, keep turning up in concert programmes from Tokio to New York, from Peking to London. The work of Russian composers is unmistakably human, stemming from the emotions, born of the heart.

When Alexandra asked me what we thought of duodecuple-scale music in the West, she countered my qualified approval with, "We don't much like it here. You see, it isn't composed from the heart yet."

There I think we have the secret of Soviet art. The Russian feels his music first, and intellectualises about it at a later stage. He can indulge in self-criticism, but always after the performance. The performance itself is emotional, yet controlled, like a perfect act of love.

During our stay in the USSR we saw two outstanding visiting opera companies. The first was the Hungarian Opera from Budapest, which was giving a two-week season at the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre. Ferenc Erkel's *Bank Ban*, a favourite repertoire piece in Hungary since its first performance in 1861, was brilliantly conducted by Andras Korody. The staging was conventional, but very effective, and the costumes were finely done. Jozsef Joviczky brought just the right blend of simple noble soldier and pathetically jealous husband to the title role. The scene in which he stabs the wicked queen, dramatically sung by Rozsi Delli, created a memorable climax. And his wronged wife, whom he suspects of unfaithfulness, touchingly played by Maria Matyas, who has a pure voice of great beauty, received sympathetic and tender handling from the orchestra. The chorus was superb.

This vast company of Hungarians was staying at our hotel. We therefore had the opportunity of watching its members' relationship with their Russian hosts at very close quarters, and observed none of the signs of political resentment which "music" criticism in the *Daily Telegraph* would lead one to suppose was the striking feature of any musical event in which the USSR meets her neighbours. We found great difficulty in tearing ourselves away from the atmosphere of amity and creativeness in which artists of all nationalities live in Moscow.

In Leningrad we saw the Lithuanian Opera and Ballet Company perform the ever-glorious *Prince Igor* and Minkus's charming old-fashioned ballet *Don Quixote*. This lively group has an enormous repertoire, which includes many modern operas. There are some weaknesses of brass and voice, but these are more than made up for by the overall excellence and vitality of artists and production.

One of our most enjoyable evenings was spent at the Moscow Operetta

Theatre's performance of *Spring Sings* by Kabalevsky. No small part of our pleasure was due to the perfection of Professor Stolyarov's handling of the orchestra, and the high-spiritedness and charm of B. A. Kondelaki's production. A gay and stimulating evening, which, to our sorrow, was the last of the season. The Irkutsk Company which followed was not of the same standard, though its production of Alexandrov's *Thousand and First Wife* caught the atmosphere of the Arabian Nights with just the right note of fantasy.

A personal highlight for me was a talk with Dmitri Shostakovich at the Moscow Composers' Union. No living composer is writing music with more significant content than this great symphonist. His technical brilliance as an orchestrator is never used to cover up a lack of substance. Too many modern scores are like Peer Gynt's onion if you peel the instrumental skins off. Every note in a Shostakovich score counts. There is no redundancy. I treasure a copy of his 11th Symphony inscribed: "For dear Dennis Stoll, in warmest memory of our first happy meeting in Moscow." He told me that his new operetta, *Cheryomushki*, is being produced at the Moscow Operetta Theatre in December, and wished me success with my own *Robin Hood*, which is to be given its world premiere by the same company not long afterwards.

Igor Bezrodny, the Ysaye among Russian violinists, showed us the Moscow Conservatoire and its delightful concert hall, which was closed to the public at the time. I was particularly impressed by the Glinka Exhibition, which gave a panorama of the composer's life in carefully collected pictures and mementoes. In one of the music rooms Bezrodny and I went through my *Sonata Concertante* for violin and piano, composed at his request and dedicated to him. He is broadcasting and recording it this season. He took us on an unforgettable visit to the Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition, and saw us off on the train when we finally departed for Leningrad to catch our boat home.

In Leningrad I explored the Theatre Museum, situated on the other side of Rossi Street from the famous Ballet School. There I was warmly received by the director, who asked me to request anything I liked from the opera record library, and although I gave him some posers I never stumped him. I heard Chaliapin sing an aria from Massenet's little-known *Don Quixote*, as well as Lensky, Reizin, and other great Soviet artists, both on disc and tape. He showed me his treasures, tracing the history of the Russian dramatic and musical theatre from the eighteenth century to the present day. There were so many marvellous things, and touching things. I was moved to see the shoes of Karsavina and Pavlova reverently laid beside those of the great Soviet ballerinas. Diaghilev, Fokine, Nijinsky—all were represented there. No political distinction, no harboured animosity against the émigrés. It was sufficient that they were great artists. Once again I was made to see what generous, warm-hearted people these Soviet Russians are. Art for them really has no barriers. I found myself sighing with protective relief that the director spoke so little English, and could not read our prejudiced English press, which would persuade one, if it could, that Soviet man is bound hook, line and sinker to perpetual politics.

Strange as it may seem to some, we never discussed politics as little as during our five weeks in Russia. No one ever sought to "convert" us. Indeed, we felt that the Russians were far too busily occupied with creative activities to indulge in the time-wasting occupation of trying to convince others of the righteousness of their own ways.

Our journey was most enjoyable, both musically and in human contact. There is no greater obstacle to enjoyment of music, and understanding of people, than to approach them with a mind made up.

EISENSTEIN'S "IVAN THE TERRIBLE"

Grigori Alexandrov

Part II of Sergei Eisenstein's famous film "Ivan the Terrible," about which there has been so much speculation and controversy, was released in the USSR this autumn, and shown at the Brussels Exhibition. As we go to press, it is expected that it will be seen shortly in Great Britain. In this article, a former colleague of Eisenstein, himself a leading director of Soviet films, discusses features of the picture and of Eisenstein's genius.

AFTER hard battles in which he overcame not only numerically superior enemy forces but also the separatism of the boyars within the state, Czar Ivan IV reached the Baltic Sea. During battle he caught sight of its waves, and wanted to show Malyuta Skuratov the attainment of his ambition, the free sea; he raised the mortally wounded Malyuta so that he might look upon the sea. A great wave rolled threateningly towards Czar Ivan, but he bent his stern glance upon it—and the wave bowed its foaming crest and fell submissively at his feet.

"By the sea we stand and shall continue to stand", said the Czar to the mighty ranks of the Russian warriors.

That is how Eisenstein's film trilogy *Ivan the Terrible* was supposed to end, symbolising the essential meaning of the struggle of Ivan and those who supported him.

During his many years' preparation for the film, Eisenstein tried to solve the problem of film tragedy. He considered that the cinema had its own specific means for creating deep tragedy, and long sought for a character, a biography, and material through which his creative dreams could be realised. To Eisenstein, Czar Ivan Vasilievich was a man of colossal contradictions—of progress and reaction. His great deeds—the unification of the Russian state, the struggle for independence—took place during an intensive war against the independent boyaral aristocracy and against its intrigues, plots and internal quarrels. In his screen tragedy, Eisenstein wanted to show how Ivan's character was made "terrible" by his environment, how by force of historical necessity he became the founder of Russian military art, and laid the basis for the organisation of a regular army. The capture of Kazan put an end to the devastating raids into Russian territory. The annexation of Siberia and of the khanate of Astrakhan and the victory over Livonia were essential steps in the national development of Russia. In his film Eisenstein wanted to show that Ivan the Terrible had used the terror against the boyars, and had not stopped short of mass executions, precisely because he was fighting to strengthen the integrity and might of the state.

In Eisenstein's opinion, Ivan IV was a man of strong will and character, who displayed tremendous persistence and energy in achieving historic tasks, and who was a brilliant diplomat, a skilful general and a resolute and experienced politician. It was only the tragic circumstances of his personal life and the treachery of the boyars that formed Ivan's "terrible" character, and made him suspicious and irritable. Eisenstein regarded all this as exceptionally interesting material for an original film tragedy. It was not easy for him to assess the different interpretations of the historic figure of Ivan the Terrible, for even defenders of the autocracy like Karamzin took a sharply negative attitude towards Ivan IV, exaggerating the "horrors of the terror"

and attributing them to the Czar's "evil will". Undoubtedly Eisenstein was also influenced by the works of Lermontov, Repin and Antokolsky on Czar Ivan. This helped him to bring the figures in his tragedy to life, but at the same time caused him to retain a number of out-of-date historical conceptions.

The grim conditions of the second world war and the dispersal of research workers made it difficult for Eisenstein to learn about the latest results of historical research and new material on the reign of Ivan IV. In any case Eisenstein wanted to create his own original concept. If he had managed to finish all three parts of his tragedy he could and would have reached correct historical conclusions.

While work was in progress on the second part, I was the artistic director of "Mosfilm", and by the will of fate I had to "direct" the work of my teacher, and to take part in all the arguments that arose around the picture, and so had the opportunity to observe the titanic work of Eisenstein as script writer, producer and historian. He had many doubts and unsolved problems. Eisenstein never said that he had found something, but always declared that he was looking for something. And all his films, beginning with *Strike*, made in 1924, and ending with *Ivan the Terrible*, are quite different. They were a search for different artistic paths, a trying out of different methods, research that was not only artistic but scientific, work not just on one film, but on the principles of socialist realism.

The tasks Eisenstein set himself in the *Ivan the Terrible* trilogy were immense. One of his fundamental creative tasks here was the problem of portraying a tragic character on the screen. He and his comrades made thousands of sketches, designs and schemes for the lighting and montage of the film with the music. Attracted by the idea of creating a new type of film tragedy, he was often carried away by the tragic form, and for its sake deviated from the logic of events, strayed from the most important problems of Ivan the Terrible's times, and digressed into the personal, domestic, private round of events.

Eisenstein, famous as a creator of mass crowd scenes, departed from this tradition in the second part of *Ivan the Terrible* and got trapped in the cramped corners and halls of the royal palace. The action of Part II ignores the Russian countryside and the life of Moscow, and turns away from the political activity of Czar Ivan. The life of the people is not shown in it at all. Consequently, the cruel terror of the Czar becomes incomprehensible at times, and his political aims appear hazy, while his constructive work—the unification of the Russian state—is full of hopeless gloom and introspection. Because of this the *oprichina* seems like some kind of a sect, whereas it was an army, and the struggle with Efrosinya Staritskaya monopolises the whole of the second part, and excludes the more important historical material about Ivan's preparations for the Livonian campaign.

Eisenstein devoted five years of his life to making *Ivan the Terrible*, in difficult war-time and post-war conditions. He directed work on the film from hospital, and although the second part was not always filmed as he wished the film was finally edited. When his health improved, Eisenstein listened to the criticism of his colleagues, worked out a plan for the third part and, for the sake of continuity, also worked out alterations to Part II, of which he himself had criticisms. His proposals and plan for finishing the film were approved. Preparations for further filming began. But Sergei Mikhailovich's health grew worse, and in February 1948 he died.

Ten years have passed since Eisenstein's death. Time has shown that in spite of a whole series of subjective conceptions by the director, which are sometimes contrary to modern historical opinion, the film *Ivan the Terrible* is interesting because of the beauty of its form, the originality and innova-

tion of its execution, and the distinction of its production. It is exceptionally valuable for film workers and critics, and audiences throughout the world, to know the specific possibilities of the cinema and to see examples of masterly direction, acting and camera work.

With regard to the acting, one must mention first and foremost the great actor Nikolai Cherkassov, who mastered with great skill the complicated problems set him by the producers, and who suffused plasticity and truth into this experiment. Deep tragedy must surely be an enlarged and generalised reflection of life ; it is convention freed from banality. But in a *screen* tragedy the image is still created with the aid of composition, sets and foreshortening. All this has been used to help the actor create a character of Shakespearian dimensions which would be an expressive and original living portrait of Ivan.

The conventional character of Serafima Birman's Staritskaya is even more marked. This is no longer a living person but rather a tragic mask, a personified idea. This is obsession itself.

Sergei Prokofiev's music closely resembles this style. It does not carry on the traditions of Russian music, nor is it derived from the epoch depicted on the screen. And in its dynamic bald rhythmic structure there is the same elimination of the particular.

The talents of the other actors in *Ivan the Terrible* were shown quite differently.

Mikhail Nazanov's Kurbsky, for example, is a vivid, convincing character portrayal. Mikhail Zharov attempted a similar style in his role, but was not helped by the conception of Malyuta Skuratov in the script ; the director regarded him primarily as a hangman, a faithful hound of his lord, and forgot that he was the outstanding organiser of his time, a brilliant, talented general.

We see new means of expression tried out in the performances of P. Kadochnikov (Vladimir Staritsky) and of M. Kuznetsov (Basmanov) in particular. This is yet another genre—more “earthly” and more ingenuous. The stylistic tasks in these roles contrast with the tasks of the remaining groups of the cast, showing the extent of the searching and original research of the producers of *Ivan the Terrible*.

But if we speak of the acting as a searching, the work of the cameramen, Edward Tissé and Andrei Moskvín, and of the artist, Joseph Spinel, is unquestionably an example to be imitated. They have given us a gallery, a whole museum of pictures, which must each be studied separately, so as to learn the peculiarities of their composition, lighting and tone. All the same, these are not disjointed pictures and it is no less interesting to study them as montage sequences. All these—the methods of treatment, the discoveries and resources, and the high quality of the artistic solution—are a field for study by art critics and practising artists.

In speaking of the film's artistic merits, Eisenstein's part in this must not be forgotten. Only because of his encyclopædic knowledge of the history of art and his outstanding, acute artistic taste was he able to set himself and his colleagues problems of such dimensions.

I would like to discuss two episodes in Part II which fully demonstrate the success of the producers.

First of all the “fiery furnace” sequence : here one recalls both the brilliantly conceived trio of little angels and the superb lighting of the whole scene, the little boy whose ringing voice cuts across the half-hushed whisper of those at prayer, and the conflicting rhythms of the religious service, the impending “humiliation” of the Czar and the full force of Ivan's entry with the oprichniks. All the details here serve a single aim and point straight to it—a turning point has been reached in the character of the sovereign. “Henceforward I shall be what you call me ! I shall be terrible.”

The setting, the surroundings, the rhythm and the quality of composition play an even more important part in the episode of the banquet. Besides the masterly, infinitely free introduction of all the achievements already known to us, Eisenstein made use of colour.* He said more than once that the cinema must not be coloured but *colourful*. And his conception, the true voice of the cinema, expressed in this film for all to see, imparts a special dramatic effect to the events in the state chambers, not colouring the scene with the tints of half-tones, but leading to the tragic dénouement with a frenzied rhythm of combinations and a kind of struggle between spots as red as blood, translucent blue and raven black. Evidently the director himself did not fully appreciate the effect of the new qualities of the cinema and dragged out the procession of the *oprishina* in the Uspensky Cathedral. Here the oppressiveness of the tragic comes too close to a plain “unleashing” of fear on the viewer. On the other hand, the final composition—simple and soft in colouring, as though restoring equilibrium in our perception of the film—noticeably brings a cleansing, a catharsis—that quality which from time immemorial has constituted the value and peculiarity of the genre of tragedy.

This was Eisenstein's last work. The original touch peculiar to this great artist, the striving to discover new means of expression, the attempts to create a new genre—film tragedy—make this film interesting despite its errors and deviations in the treatment of historic events; for this is not a textbook, not a scientific treatise, but a work of art.

During the last ten years many legends, ideas and theories, all equally at variance with reality, have grown up in the bourgeois literature about *Ivan the Terrible* around the history of the film's birth. For us Eisenstein was and remains the unsurpassed master of the cinema, one of the founders of the art of socialist realism. Examples from the film show that up till now no one has achieved such consummate use of the cinema's means of expression; there are qualities in the film which remain new even today.

It may be that this is the first occasion in the history of the cinema that an unfinished film has been shown on the screen. But searching, discoveries and artistic experiments are never finished. Let the filmgoers of the whole world look at this unfinished experiment of a great master and judge it as the flight of a Soviet artist's creative thought to new heights of craftsmanship, to new discoveries in the art of the cinema.

Sovetskaya Kultura, 30.8.58.

Translated by M.M.

* These colours sequences were not shown at the Brussels Exhibition.—ED.

SAMARKAND AND THE OLD SILK ROUTE

Some Travellers' Stories

Kutty Hookham

A GENERATION ago a British consul in Istanbul surrounded the name of Samarkand with glamour for the public in this country when he wrote some verses including the refrain :

“We take the golden road to Samarkand” (chanted by merchant princes of Baghdad).*

The real story, however, of Samarkand and the oases of central Asia is of much greater interest and deserves to be better known.

Samarkand lies in the foothills of the snow-crested Pamirs—the roof of the world—whose narrow gorges lead south to Afghanistan and to India. The red sands of the Kizil Kum desert stretch to the north, and beyond them is the Hungry Steppe. To the west lies the Black Desert, or Kara Kum. The ancient rivers Oxus (Amu-Darya) and Jaxartes (Syr-Darya) flow north-west through this region, the only rivers that do not vanish into the desert.

For 2,000 years or more the oases in these foothills have refreshed travellers whose caravans have crossed from Mesopotamia or India through the heart of Asia to China. Desert-weary travellers have called Samarkand the “garden of souls”. Here, according to the mythology of the Zoroastrians, in the region called “beyond the river” (i.e. Transoxiana), lay the original Garden of Eden.

Samarkand's greatest renown occurred in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when Europe was still emerging from the Middle Ages. She became the splendid capital of the empire of Timur, lord of Tartary (known to us as Tamburlaine), an empire which stretched from the Volga to the Ganges, from China to the Mediterranean. When subsequently this empire disintegrated, the wells and canals were allowed to fill with sand, and oases disappeared. By the late eighteenth century Samarkand was in decay, and, subjected to the rule of the infamous emirs of Bokhara, became a forbidden city.

No one from western Europe appears to have visited Samarkand from the time of Timur (when an ambassador for Henry III of Castille visited the city in 1404) until the second half of the last century, when central Asia came under czarist domination. Even then, journeys by horse, sledge or coach (according to season) by visitors from the west were as rare as they were difficult, and at the end of the century the city could hardly boast a hotel.

Earthquakes, to which the region is subject, added to the ruin that warfare and czarist occupation brought to the city.

* * *

“Tashkent, Samarkand, Bokhara . . .” a pleasant, matter-of-fact voice announced over the loudspeaker at the airport, where jets and other aircraft shone sleekly in the sun. The announcements came once in the Uzbek language, then in Russian : “Tashkent, Samarkand . . .”

Samarkand, whose summer temperatures reach 100° or more, shimmers in a gold-white haze. The low hills of the approaches are also gold-white, until the wells and streams turn the landscape to green and fill the bazaars with grapes and figs, with huge ripe melons, pomegranates, and peaches.

These hills are said to be the site of a most ancient city of Afrosiab, dating back to the second millennium B.C. Excavations have revealed broken pavements, ruins of houses and fine pottery.

* J. E. Flecker: Prologue and Epilogue to “Hassan.”

The city comes into recorded history, however, as Maracanda, the flourishing centre dominated by the Persians during the first millennium B.C. These people were Zoroastrians, fire-worshippers, a faith preserved today by the Parsees of northern India. It is thought that this religion, dominant in ancient Persia, arose not far from Samarkand, in the region of Khorezm (Khiva).*

The Zoroastrians did not bury their dead ; they exposed the bodies on the hillsides until vultures and the sun left only the bleached bones, and these were preserved in small stone bins, a number of which have been discovered.

Maracanda offered strong but useless resistance to Alexander the Great when he led his armies east in 329 B.C. It was in this city that (in a fit of drunken passion) Alexander killed his friend and adviser Clytus. A garrison was established at Maracanda, and Alexander proceeded to the banks of the Jaxartes, where he founded one of the innumerable cities to bear his name. At this point he decided to go no farther east (the chroniclers do not make clear why), but, leaving an occupation force of 3,000 cavalry and 10,000 foot, and taking as his wife Roxana, daughter of the local king, Alexander turned south to continue his campaign along the valley of the Indus.

Dynasties were founded and Greek culture was introduced by the generals to whom Alexander entrusted these provinces, but their power succumbed to that of the Parthians, a Persian empire engaged in a long struggle with Rome. Like Rome, the Parthian empire was a slave civilisation achieving a high degree of culture until the second or third century A.D.

During this time Samarkand and the neighbouring valleys flourished ; merchants and craftsmen filled the oases with their skill and their goods, from India in the south, from the Urals and Siberia in the north (whence came gold and fine metals) and from east to west passed the caravans along the great silk route from China.

Then for several centuries the power of the Kushan nomads replaced that of Parthia. The Kushans were eastern Mongols whose dominion extended from northern India through central Asia, and they introduced Buddhism to Transoxiana, which became a highway for Buddhist missionaries carrying their faith from India to China.

In the eighth century, after the rise of Islam in the Middle East, vast Arab invasions took place. Local princes and chieftains became tributaries of the Arab caliphate. Large numbers of Arabs settled in the towns and noticeably influenced local culture. The Muslim faith spread, not without resistance, and the Arab tongue became the language of state and literature. Caliph Haroun al Raschid was ruling in Baghdad when revolt once more broke out in Samarkand. The revolt spread, and the famous caliph himself set out with an army to subdue the city. He never reached it. Suffering from a grave malady, the fruits of a life of reckless dissipation (recorded only in part by the *Arabian Nights*), he died and was buried *en route*.†

From the ninth century onwards Samarkand and other cities of central Asia have been strongholds of the Muslim faith. On one of the hills outside Samarkand the original Arab missionaries journeying to preach the religion of Mohammed were said to have rested. Cutting up and boiling a sheep, they agreed to decide by lot the direction of their future journeys. One put his hand

* Less substantiated tradition ascribes the discovery of wine during this period to the virtues of the Transoxianian grape—virtues of which the people of Samarkand are still justly proud. The Persian prince-astrologer Jemshid (*vide* Omar Khayyam) thought to take back to his capital some of the superb grapes of Samarkand. On opening the casks he found the grapes had fermented, and ordered that the acid fruit be placed in his cellars, labelled "poison".

Some nights later he quarrelled with his favourite wife, who, seeing in the vaults these casks, in her despair drank some . . .

When she awoke from a heavy sleep her cares had departed.

This remedy became a habit with her, until Jemshid discovered her secret and shared her joy. . . . They say that this beverage is called in Persia to this day "the delightful poison". But Jamshid became a drunkard and was driven from his throne.

† Readers will remember that it was the perfidy of a queen of Samarkand, wife of King Shahzaman, that sparked off the tales of *A Thousand And One Nights*.

in the pot and drew out the head, which gave him first choice, and he decided to remain in Samarkand. Another drew the heart, and chose to return to Mecca. The third got the hind quarters and preferred Baghdad. Hence Samarkand is called the head and Mecca the heart of Islam to this day (my interpreter, a student in his early twenties, never managed to explain to me what Baghdad was called).

The Arab-Islamic influence was decisive. Cities like Samarkand, Merv, Bokhara and others prospered and became centralised, semi-independent powers, able to put down local dissension and to repulse attacks from the nomads (Turks and Mongols) who for centuries swept down from the east. Merchants thrived ; the caravanserais were filled. Poets, and scholars of philosophy, medicine, geography, mathematics and history created a rich literature in Arabic and Persian. The royal library at Bokhara held a treasury of manuscripts, each department of science being accorded a room to itself. The philosopher doctor Avicenna lived, worked and enjoyed himself excessively in Bokhara at the end of the tenth century. His works were translated into Latin and were a guide to the study of medicine in Europe until the seventeenth century. In Merv, Omar Khayyam studied and taught ; he should be remembered for his development of astrology and, in particular, algebra, but is rather better known for his quatrains in honour of the grape.

When tribes of the Seljuk Turks (also Islamic, but less cultured) invaded central Asia and succeeded in reaching the Mediterranean in the eleventh century, Samarkand and Bokhara remained seats of Muslim lore and Arab culture when such centres were being destroyed farther west. It was against these Turks (later to be dominated by the Ottoman Turks) that the European armies engaged in their crusades to secure the city of Jerusalem for the Christians.

Muslims have made pilgrimages to Samarkand and Bokhara for nearly 1,000 years. At the outskirts of Samarkand, on a hillside, are a well and a shrine dedicated to Kasim ibn Abbas, an Islamic missionary. He preached the Koran to the infidels with great success until, upon this hill, he was overcome by enemies and beheaded. But the infidels did not triumph ; the holy Kasim seized his head and leapt into the well, where he lives to this day, ready to defend the faithful and to emerge in the hour of the universal triumph of Islam. His shrine is called the Shah Zindeh, that is " the living king ".

Centuries later Timur built a mosque here, and in the sacred ground around many of the old Tartar's family,* his generals and trusted servants, are buried in temples of azure ceramics, alabaster, ivory and gold, which even in ruin have a rare beauty. The mullah in the mosque by the shrine still prays with the faithful, and I had to wait, barefoot, until the prayers were ended before I could visit the shrine. The day was hot, white lizards scampered about the sand dunes, and I found the water from the well fresh and delicious.

The next great invasion came also from the nomads of the east, from the Mongol hordes (or tribes) of Ghengis Khan. It is said that Ghengis, having conquered all Mongolia and northern China, had little wish to proceed farther into central Asia ; but that emissaries sent to discuss questions of trade were insulted and killed by the rulers of Otrar, an oasis city neighbour to Samarkand. In 1219, Ghengis Khan set forth and rode with his legions to the banks of the Jaxartes. Otrar, the offending city, Tashkent and other places fell before his horsemen, and Bokhara after a short siege. On entering Bokhara, Ghengis addressed his warriors from the steps of the cathedral mosque : " The hay is cut : give your horses fodder ! " As elsewhere, this invitation to plunder and sack was accepted without restraint and when the Mongols left only the great mosque and some palaces marked the spot where the famed centre of science had stood.

* Although the Tartars were a section of the Mongol nomads from the regions north of China, the terms Mongol and Tartar are today interchangeable in common usage.

From the ruins of Bokhara, Ghengis Khan rode to Samarkand, which, although defended by a force of over 100,000, was weakened by treachery, and surrendered. The city was sacked and its people were scattered. Like Alexander before him, Ghengis proceeded no farther but turned south to pursue his enemies along the valley of the Indus, a pursuit which took him as far as Delhi. Vengeance and slaughter accompanied him throughout his campaigns, and the northern provinces of India, like those of central Asia, were ravaged. Ghengis returned to Mongolia by way of Bokhara and Samarkand.

On his death at a venerable age, the empire was divided among his sons and grandsons. The western lands were given to the grandson Batu Khan. With his warriors—the tribes known as the Golden Horde—Batu established a kingdom in the regions round Moscow and eventually swept into Europe, subjugating Poland, capturing Budapest and menacing Vienna ; at which point Batu was summoned east to Tartary.

Central Asia became the province of Zagatai, the second son of Ghengis, and the region, although subjected to extortionate taxes and obligations, revived. Craftsmen and merchants again filled the bazaars of Samarkand. The old silk route was open. Half a century after the destruction by Ghengis Khan, Marco Polo was able to praise it thus : “ It is a noble city, adorned with beautiful gardens, and surrounded by a plain in which are produced all the fruits that man can desire.”*

While many nomads remained wandering herdsmen (some even up to the twentieth century), others settled in the lands of their conquests, the khans taking for themselves the produce of the subjected estates and becoming feudal lords. From the seventh century onwards feudalism developed in Transoxiana, and became dominant towards the end of the ninth century. Slavery, however, survived until the twentieth century. Although officially condemned by the czarist government, a slave could nevertheless be bought at the end of the nineteenth century in the open market at Bokhara for 115 silver roubles, five swords, or two guns.

* * *

The dynasty of Ghengis Khan in central Asia was overthrown in the fourteenth century by Timur, a local herdsman, son of a chief who had seen better days. Timur was born at Kesh, the “ green city ”, in the mountains south of Samarkand. After an adventurous youth when he lived by cunning and the sword, Timur rid himself of his companion at arms, Husein, and took possession of Samarkand, Bokhara and the surrounding country. He created a strong, well-organised army of nomad horsemen, and his victorious campaigns carried him through Persia, Georgia and Mongolia. After a protracted struggle with the khanate of the Golden Horde in the north, he broke up their empire and turned south again without, however, attacking Moscow.

Timur turned then to India. The Punjab and the whole Ganges delta fell easy prey to his legions, and in 1398 he returned to Samarkand, which he had made his capital, laden with spoils.

At this time Europe was trembling at the shadow that had fallen across her eastern threshold, the shadow of the Ottoman Turks under their sultan Bayazid, “ the Thunder ”. The Christian knights of Europe had just been annihilated in their last crusade against these Turks (Nicopolis 1396), and Bayazid was proceeding to the occupation of Constantinople.

This conquest was, however, postponed for another half-century. Bayazid had been rash enough to provoke the indignation of Timur, “ this Mongol, an old, white-haired cripple from the far east, an intellectual specialist in chess,

* *The Travels of Marco Polo*, Everyman edition.

theology and conquest"—to challenge the master of Delhi and Samarkand, Baghdad and Damascus.

On the plain of Angora the famous Ottoman army, instrument of so many victories over the Christian west, was destroyed by the Mongol cavalry.* Bayazid himself succumbed not long after.

The lame, chess-playing conqueror became a legend in Renaissance Europe, and Christopher Marlowe, dedicating the first blank-verse drama in the English language to this theme, depicts Timur in his chariot drawn by teams of defeated sultans, shahs and princes :

“Holla ye pampered jades of Asia !

What, can ye draw but twenty miles a day ? ”

Timur, like Ghengis, was notorious for the ferocious cruelty of his campaigns, especially in the face of opposition or after treachery. Populations of captured cities were slaughtered, artisans only being spared to be driven off in captivity, to embellish his palaces or to be sold in the slave markets. Towers and pyramids arose from the skulls of his conquered victims. But from the tribute he extorted, Timur built at Samarkand a city to reflect in splendour the magnitude of his conquests. Broad avenues were laid, a water supply was organised and gardens surrounded the city. Once again Samarkand became the centre of a thriving caravan trade ; merchants filled the bazaars. The blue domes of lacquered tiles, the alabaster and gold minarets which rise today above the city, survivors of earthquakes, invasion and neglect, are nearly all the legacy of Timur and his dynasty. And after the greatest of his grandsons, Ulug-Beg, scientist and astrologer of renown, had perished by the sword of his own factious son, another descendant of Timur, driven from Samarkand, conquered northern India and founded there the great dynasty of the Moguls, the dynasty of Akbar and Shah Jehan. This conqueror was Baber, whose memoirs are so full of praises for the beauty of Samarkand.

One of the most splendid of Timur's monuments is the mosque of Bibi Khanum. Perhaps, like the Taj Mahal in India, it records a widowed husband's sorrow. Bibi-Khanum, said to be buried here, was a Chinese princess, most loved of Timur's four (main) wives. An immense arch of mosaic tiles gives access to a courtyard and to the mosque itself, crowned by a dome of turquoise enamel. Texts from the Koran gleam in gold letters from the cracked ruins. The minarets have crumbled and the courtyard is overgrown by grasses and small trees. During the czarist occupation at the end of the nineteenth century the courtyard was used as a cotton market and as stables. Today the dome has been shored up and the mosque protected against further destruction.

If we are to believe another of the stories, the mosque was begun when Timur was campaigning in India. Bibi-Khanum wished to surprise him and build a mosque more beautiful than the world had ever seen. Before it was finished, a messenger announced that the lord was returning from India. Bibi-Khanum went herself to the mosque to ask the young architect to hurry to complete it before Timur's arrival. But the architect, in love with the queen, was more anxious to prolong the work than to end it. However, this he promised to do in time, if Bibi-Khanum would reward him with a kiss. . . . She replied that all women were the same—only the clothes were different—and offered him any woman from the harem. Bringing a dish of coloured eggs, she said, “Break any one, whatever the colour and shape, they are all the same inside.”

The young architect brought two cups, identical. Into one he poured water, into the other vodka. He said, “The colour and the shape are the same ; but the contents are not. There are some women who are cold, like water ; there are others who burn, and set the veins on fire, like vodka.”

* Henry IV of England (Bolingbroke) wrote to Timur, congratulating him, “as one sportsman to another”.

Bibi-Khanum, unable to deny his logic, agreed to the bargain.

The building was completed and the young man came to claim the kiss. The queen covered her cheek with her hand, but the kiss was so ardent that it burned right through.

When Timur came he saw the mosque, and he saw the imprint of the kiss on the cheek of Bibi-Khanum. He ordered the capture and execution of the young architect, but he, having been warned, disappeared into heaven.

Timur, concerned for the succession, turned his attention to his grandsons (of whom there were many) because his first and second sons had died and a third was a weak-minded profligate. He appointed Mohammed Sultan his successor, but this grandson died in 1403 of wounds received at Angora. Timur ordered a special monument to commemorate him, and a fluted dome supported by an eight-sided tower rose in Samarkand to be the mausoleum of Mohammed Sultan. Meanwhile Timur had decided on further conquests to the east, and set out for China in the winter of 1405.

Before the year was ended he too had died, at Otrar, on the Jaxartes.

He was buried with his grandson in this temple, under a slab of dark jade.

Conquered peoples, like the Persians, referred to Timur as Timur i Leng (Timur the Lame), from a wound inflicted in one of his campaigns. He was also reputed to have a withered right arm. Admirers called him the Great Emir, the Lord, the Earth Shaker. A contemporary* described him as "big in brow and head, mighty in strength and courage, wonderful in nature, white in colour, mixed with red, but not dark, stout of limb, with broad shoulders, thick fingers, long legs, perfect build, long beard, dry hands, lame on the right side, with eyes like candles, without brilliance, powerful in voice".

In 1941 the graves were opened by Soviet historians and archaeologists. In the crypt below the jade stone a wooden coffin was found, and in it were remnants of clothing, some beard, one eyebrow, and one red moustache. When the skeleton was examined the bones of one arm were found to have grown together in a way that would have produced a withered limb, and the bones of the right leg had been broken.

Timur is again in his grave. The maintenance of the monuments with which he embellished his capital is assured by an income of 3,000,000 roubles annually from the government of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, for the upkeep of the historic monuments of Samarkand.

* * *

Samarkand, "forbidden city," is so no longer. Before my visit I took the precaution of consulting honest, albeit dated, authorities on the hazards of such a journey through central Asia. The Buddhist pilgrim Hiouen Tshang, who anticipated my journey by some thirteen and a half centuries (he travelled this route in 629), warned that "one is often a prey to the ferocity of dragons, which attack travellers. Those who travel this route should not wear red clothing, or carry calabashes, or cry aloud". These precautions I observed to the letter.

Other warnings, more up-to-date, are of a different order. Karl Baedeker, patron saint of tourists, said in 1914 (his last utterance on the subject of travel in Russia), "Foreigners are not allowed to visit Turkestan except by special permission of the Russian Government. A traveller must send in his request through his country's embassy at St. Petersburg at the latest six months before the beginning of his journey. . . . Immediately on arrival the traveller should call upon the Russian diplomatic officials (dress clothes *de rigueur*)."

My request for visa extensions, tickets and reservations for a visit to central Asia was made to Intourist in Moscow one Monday morning last August. On the following Wednesday, before sunrise, I was in a plane with tickets and visa in my case (but no dress clothes), flying south-east to Samarkand.

* Ahmed Ibn Arabshah (a captive of Timur)—tr. Saunders.

A New Stage in Soviet Education

Deana Levin

Miss Levin is the author of Children in Soviet Russia and of a new book, Soviet Education, announced for publication this winter. Visiting the USSR this past summer she was able to discuss with teachers there the current problems of Soviet education and the schemes being considered for its reform. In this article she outlines some of these ideas and the reasons behind them.

IN any country, under any system, the school is an integral part of the system and is used to train young people to carry on all the jobs essential to the demands of the community.

Soviet schools have fulfilled this function ever since the founding of the Soviet state, and have developed and changed as it has developed. In the beginning, when the first need was for literacy, the schools were devoted to this task. And as the country emerged from being an extremely backward agricultural one, and began to develop its own industry and to think in terms of mechanised farming, the schools naturally had to work out a curriculum which would train pupils to take their places as skilled workers and peasants.

At first it was difficult to decide on the form of school and the methods of teaching. There was a strong reaction against the extremely formal type of education given in the pre-revolutionary "gymnasias", and the various experimental projects then popular in Europe and America seemed one way of working differently. The Dalton Plan and other "child-centred" methods were adopted, teachers took a back seat in the classrooms, there were no set syllabuses and no centralised curricula. After a few years it became obvious in a number of ways that this was not a system of education capable of satisfying the needs and demands of growing industry. The universities and higher institutes grumbled that students were entering without a proper body of knowledge on mathematics and science, and were not capable of writing their own language in a literate fashion. Industry complained that youngsters leaving school were not adequately taught, and parents and teachers alike began to discuss the shortcomings of the schools.

The result of the discussions was the return in 1932 to the formal school with a centralised curriculum and set syllabuses in each subject. Schooling was compulsory for four years and began to be extended to seven years. Some schools were extended to ten years, with courses leading to higher education. Polytechnical training included a number of hours' work a week in a factory or workshop. There was also a wide network of technical and trade schools which took pupils who had completed seven classes and gave them a specialised training varying from six months to three years.

The second world war interrupted the education of many young people and evening schools for working youth were set up, covering the curriculum of the normal day schools in an abbreviated form. Thousands of students completed their seven- and even ten-year schooling in these evening courses.

Polytechnical training was dropped from the curriculum for a period up to 1952. Then, at the nineteenth Party Congress, it was decided to re-introduce it, and at the same time it was said that, as it was the intention to extend compulsory schooling to ten years, school leavers would no longer automatically go on to higher education; in fact the majority would go straight into

industry or agriculture. It was essential, therefore, to organise the curriculum in such a way that all pupils would get a grounding in the scientific principles of industry, and in the actual processes of production. Polytechnisation must be an important part of education, both in the form of practical work and as an integral part of the teaching of the sciences and of mathematics.

The intention to make schooling compulsory for ten years resulted in the opening of more and more ten-year schools, until at present there is in fact ten-year schooling in about 130 towns and cities and in a number of villages in the Soviet Union. Criticism of the syllabuses, of the approach to polytechnisation, of text-books and of teaching methods has been going on during the last few years and several facts have emerged. Provision of school workshops is inadequate, teachers are approaching their subjects in far too academic a fashion and obviously have not themselves the knowledge of the practical application of subjects like chemistry and physics to industry. This means that teacher training needs changing. Schools are sometimes attached to very small, narrowly specialised factories and the practical work done there by the pupils fits them for nothing except a job for which few workers are needed and which they in any case might not be interested in doing.

Against this background of dissatisfaction and revaluation Mr. Khrushchev has made observations on Soviet education—in his speech to the Komsomol Congress in April, and in his recent memorandum to the Central Committee of the Communist Party—which pinpoint some of the main problems under discussion. Here again is a moment in which the Soviet school is not meeting the needs of a rapidly developing industry and agriculture in a period of tremendous scientific advance and change.

The most important shortcoming in Mr. Khrushchev's view is an ideological one. Young people finishing the ten-year school appear to have been given the firm conviction that the only consequence to passing the school-leaving examination can be to go on to higher education. They feel that to go straight to work is a sign in some way of failure and would rather study any subject, however remote from their interests, than go into a factory or work on a farm. Khrushchev puts the blame for this on the schools and parents alike, and says that one of the reasons is that the curriculum is still too narrowly academic, like that of the "gymnasia", where pupils were in fact only prepared for higher education. And the schools are not training their pupils to respect labour, to feel a desire to be useful to society, to participate actively in the productive labour necessary for society.

While stating that the Soviet school must prepare an all-round educated person, well versed in the sciences as well as being able to work systematically, Khrushchev makes the apparently contradictory suggestion that after a seven- or eight-year compulsory education young people of fifteen or sixteen years of age should go straight to work and continue their studies at evening schools. He makes alternative suggestions as well, including one of a second stage of education in high schools which would continue a general education and at the same time have a vocational bias. While studying at this kind of school the pupils would work one, two or more days a week in a factory, farm or enterprise and finish after three years as workers with certain qualifications.

No one should go on to higher education unless he has worked at a job for at least two years, and not only should the system of higher education be overhauled, but entry to it should be on an entirely different basis. Higher education can only take in 450,000 students a year, half of whom are day students and the rest evening or correspondence students. Between 2,500,000 and 3,000,000 young people will be leaving school in a year or two. It should no longer be possible to get into the university or to a higher institute through influence or background or merely on the results of examinations. "The

selection of students for higher education who come from the factories or farms must take place with the participation of the Komsomol and trade union organisations on the job who will know the young people and their attitude towards their work and to the collective."

Higher institutes must be situated on state farms or right next to centres of industry, and students must do their practical work on the spot so that they know how to handle machinery and repair it and have first-hand experience with crops and animals. Graduates from such institutes would then play their part in industry and agriculture as skilled and qualified workers, and, having trained near their homes, would be more likely to stay at their jobs with a real personal interest.

All these reforms need careful thought and discussion, and Khrushchev's memorandum to the Central Committee of the Party will be expanded to form the basis for these discussions. The final decisions will be taken by the Supreme Soviets of the Union Republics, as education comes under their jurisdiction. It will take a few years before major changes of this kind can finally be put into operation; there must be a continued flow of students to higher education and obviously the second stage of education in whatever form is decided will need considerable organisation.

Khrushchev made a point that girls still need to be taught how to cook, sew and run a home, in spite of the better facilities available. He also said that some thought must be given to the education of specially gifted children.

It is not easy at this stage to assess the situation. It is obvious that Soviet educationists and politicians are not going to allow the standards of achievement to drop; on the contrary they intend to develop their industry and agriculture in the next few years with the aim of overtaking the output of the most advanced countries in the world. This cannot be done without a vast number of well-qualified workers. It is possible that, having produced enough top-level scientific and technical personnel, they are now needing a greater number of qualified technical workers at the benches and on the farms in order to develop automation further. We can only follow the discussions and see what decisions are taken. Judgment, I feel, must be based on what is happening in the Soviet Union rather than on a comparison with our own educational system. Our requirements are different because our set-up is different.*

* Since going to press, more detailed proposals by the Central Committee for the reform of education have been published in the Soviet press and are available from *Soviet News*. See also *SCR Soviet Education Bulletin*, Vol. 5, Nos. 2 and 3/4.

DR. ZHIVAGO

Jack Lindsay

I OPENED *Dr. Zhivago* with a readiness to admire. I have a high opinion of Pasternak's poetry; I liked his earlier prose despite its rather private landscape; and I have the natural sympathy of a harried author for one of his kind at whom a large number of people are shouting abuse. Also, there have been many aspects in the Russian scene since 1917 that one might well expect Pasternak to have the right critical eye and the uncompromising tongue to deal with effectively. But I fear that the more I went into *Dr. Zhivago* the lower my opinion of the book sank.

I had not indeed expected that Pasternak would have fully mastered the technique of the novel, and was ready to accept any amount of poetic impressionism, odd patterning and intellectual argument if the total effect was humanly and artistically valid. But I was not prepared for the disorder, the failure to correlate idea and character, the failure to penetrate character at all, let alone develop it. At times Pasternak is in control and he powerfully represents the chaos and confusion of the war years, the revolution, and the civil war; but for the most part the disorder comes from imperfect understanding and an inability to organise his material so that any human or poetic significance results. To compensate for the disorder, in which a multiplicity of details and events are brought together with little attempt to sort them out into artistic or emotional coherence, Pasternak uses two devices: an endless intrusion of coincidence and a sermonising comment by the author (sometimes put with no concern for plausibility into the mind or mouth of one of the characters). As an example of the latter tendency we may take the following passage about one of the main personages of the story, Pasha Antipov, alias Strelnikov:

Filled with the loftiest aspirations from his childhood, he had looked upon the world as a vast arena where everyone competed for perfection, keeping scrupulously to the rules. When he found that this was not so, it did not occur to him that his conception of the world order might have been simplified. He nursed his grievance and with it the ambition to judge between life and the dark forces that distorted it, and to be life's champion and avenger. Embittered by his disappointment, he was armed by the revolution.

Now that might serve as the basis for a character, but it simply is not true of Pasha, whom we have known for a long time in the book before this. Pasha is a lad with a working-class background, whose father has been exiled; he has lots of reasons for backing the revolution without the one suddenly foisted on to him. Not that Pasternak has bothered with any consistent definition of his character at earlier phases. In the Urals Pasha has become worried by his wife's maternal solicitude and joins up to fight for the Tsar—though we are vaguely told that he dislikes the conventional patriotism of his fellow teachers, which was “out of tune with his own, more complicated, feelings about his country”. Before that, when on their wedding night his wife informs him that she had been seduced by an elderly rake, we are told “In all Pasha's life there had not been a change in him so decisive and abrupt as in the course of this night. He got up a different man, almost astonished that he was called Pasha Antipov.” But what the change in him was we are given no inkling. With character conceived in so disjointed and arbitrary a way, any twist by the author can perhaps be defended as relevant; but one knows very well that when Pasternak wrote the paragraph about Pasha's grievances he was not thinking of Pasha at all, but seized the chance of working in one of his own grievances. I repeat, Pasternak's grievance may be a justifiable one; if he defined a man who embodied it we might well agree with him; what we cannot accept is the way in which the grievance-tag is tied on to Pasha.

The other method of trying to give the material significance, I said, was by the constant intrusion of coincidence. If one looked at the matter realistically, one would say that Pasternak was parodying the way in which writers like Dickens or Dostoevsky use coincidence at certain points to bring together elements of the story which they do not think it worth while to link by a more tedious and extended presentation of the collision and union of forces in everyday life. But this would be incorrect. Coincidence has a sort of mystical value for Pasternak. In his early autobiographical sketch, *Safe Conduct*, he declared: "Our most innocent 'how-do-you-dos' and 'goodbyes' would have no meaning if time were not threatened with the concord of life's accidents; that is, the haphazard events of the hypnosis of being." In a sense, actuality is displaced by a dream-state of associations and significances; in another sense, the continual round of coincidental meetings expresses the inability of the characters, or their refusal, to step outside the narrow world of their personal loves and hates into the world of history, which they repudiate.

Again, one may say that this kind of method might be used with good effect in a work of fantasy; but when it is merged with a novel that is largely naturalistic in method it jars. Pasternak might perhaps reply that he wants that jarring; that he sets against the meaningless repetitions of daily life the hypnotic cycle of spiritual unions with their "fated" system. But in any event the whole thing is dubious; one can interpret it several ways at once, yet one feels in fact that it simply derives from an uncertain artistic impulse.

One's feeling that the method is being portentously "made" to play a part for which in fact it is not fitted is underlined by a passage such as the following. We have just had a scene which is truly moving and terrible—a nurse staring at a dying man who has had his face shot away:

The man who had just died was Private Gimazetdin; the excited officer who had been shouting in the wood was his son, Lieutenant Galiullin; the nurse was Lara. Gordon and Zhivago were the witnesses. All these people were there together in one place. But some of them had never known each other, while others failed to recognise each other now. And there were things about them which were never to be known for certain, while others were not to be revealed until a future time, a later meeting.

Such a passage, to be anything but a fraud, must importantly link with the whole structure of the work, with certain revelatory strands of development in the persons concerned, and so on. But it simply has no connection with anything. True, later Zhivago is himself a patient in a behind-the-line hospital, with Lieut. G. opposite; Lara enters and neither knows that the other has recognised her; but this again has simply no significance—unless it is meant to prefigure the fact that Zhivago will commit adultery with Lara.

The most important lack of consistency in focus, however, concerns the main character of the novel, Zhivago. At the outset, after his sad, bewildered childhood, he is shown as a kindly, sensitive person, full of genuine questioning. He refuses his father's legacy rather than get mixed up in a legal fight; his relations with women are largely determined by his warm sympathy; he is hurt by the sufferings of the Jews; he is filled with enthusiasm, "Mother Russia is on the move, she can't stand still. . . . Stars and trees meet and converse. . . . It makes you think of the Gospel, doesn't it? . . . Pray for the gift of understanding." He seeks to carry out his duties as a doctor; he sees through his colleagues who leave the hospital in the midst of an epidemic.

The pay wasn't good enough, so off they went; now it turns out that they had principles and civic sentiments. You meet them in the street, they hardly shake hands, but just raise an eyebrow: "So you're working for *them*?" "I am", I said, "and if you don't mind, I am proud of our privations and I respect those who honour us by imposing them on us."

And the beginnings of his isolation are convincing enough. He feels, while "secretly proud" of the revolution, that he himself is "a pigmy before the

monstrous machine of the future." He is ready to sacrifice himself in a romantic way; he even looks at trees, clouds, people, as though for the last time, expecting them to be quite swallowed up in the immensity of class war. His sense of his obligation keeps him at work, but he feels more and more lost, belonging "to neither group, having moved away from the former and lagged behind the latter". Then he decides to leave Moscow, go to the Urals, and live an entirely private life with his family. Things have inevitably been difficult (the civil war is raging); but Zhivago is shown as abruptly and hopelessly disillusioned (apparently by the unpleasant train journey), an egocentric self-centred groucher who tries to get out of doing any medical work. One feels that the Zhivago who had such a keen sense of obligation to his fellows and who prayed above all for understanding has been jettisoned, not because of any inner necessity in the character, but because the author wants to intrude and use the unfortunate man. But the change cuts away the ground on which Pasternak could have made his criticisms with human and artistic effect. That in Zhivago which could be said to have any living link with the ethic he is made to represent is plucked coldly out. His break-up is shown at length; but the focus is disturbed and several levels of presentation are illogically superimposed. On the level of argument, Zhivago represents a Christian protest against violence and inhumanity (though he is not shown as a Christian worshipper); but on the level of experience he is defined as pathologically lost and divided against himself. His protests therefore lose all value; for he has become worthless as a human being—and the narrative becomes ever less convincing in its depiction of his personal states and relations. He is agonisedly obsessed with his family while committing adultery, and indeed is so enclosed in deadly egoism that he is shown as in effect discarding both wife and lover. There is no human reality or sympathy in him or around him. Such a character cannot incarnate or express any protest at all except a neurotic one.

Indeed, so brittle and empty does Zhivago become that one is tempted to see Pasternak as bitterly satirising the futility of the ideas he holds; but this is clearly one of the confusions that arise from the shifting focus. The climax of this confusion comes in the love of Lara and Zhivago, when in the midst of their adultery she talks about the revolution breaking down family values. Her mother had been a lost, useless character who had flopped from lover to lover, one of whom, the vicious elderly character, had debauched Lara as a schoolgirl, so that she had to flee from the family bosom in order to escape total moral breakdown! Her banal talk (described as "full of meaning as the dialogues of Plato") quite lacks any sort of character, but Zhivago cries out, "How well you see all these things. What a joy to listen to you." Here the humourless comicality of unintended satire could go no farther.

Continually Pasternak shifts his ground in order to make a point. We get no suggestion that Zhivago has any fellow-feeling for the Whites until, after being kidnapped by partisans at the height of his self-division between wife and Lara, he is forced to fight in self-defence. He then discovers that he admires the enemy and sympathises with them. "With all his heart he wished them success. They belonged to families who were probably akin to him in spirit, in education, in moral discipline and values." He finds both a White and a Red wearing the same amulet; and he nurses one of the wounded Whites whom he knows (another coincidence)—presumably so that he may continue killing. We see what Pasternak is getting at; he wants to bring out the complexity of emotions in such a situation and the pity of it all; but his method is a mixture of banality and confused focus.

This kind of analysis could be continued indefinitely. The women in particular are weak. But there is not only confusion in the book. Where Pasternak writes as a lyrical poet he writes with fine precision and with his usual subtle

appreciation of the relation of man and nature. Many episodes taken in themselves, as momentary vignettes, are powerfully done and highly moving. One cannot doubt the deep feeling for people and their sufferings that underlies the book. Many of the points that Pasternak wants to make are no doubt worth making, though his clumsiness as a novelist often spoils them. Thus he shows Pasha, the devoted Red partisan leader, committing suicide after being falsely accused and after a long, high-minded conversation with his wife's lover, Zhivago; but we are not even told of what he is accused, and are shown nothing of the presumed intrigues. One may contrast the fully realised conflicts, treacheries and confused loyalties of Sholokhov's *Quiet Don*; the entangled battle between the partisan Sorokov and the unlikeable chief of divisional intelligence in A. Tolstoy's *Road to Calvary*; the confusion and horror that Babel deals with in his stories, Leonov in *Sot* or *The Badgers*, without losing artistic control; or, to take a lesser example, the recently published *Cruelty*, by Nilin, in which a humane member of the OGPU, who wins over an adversary and is helped by him to round up a gang, is overruled by his callous superior, who does not believe in conversions and who wants all the credit for his own corps, so that the humane member commits suicide.

Pasternak is no time-server; and the last pages of the novel, in which, in his own terms, the revolution has brought round its springtime of freedom, must be as sincerely felt as his criticisms. Whatever the shortcomings of his book, it would have been an excellent thing for it to be published in Russia. Such works can prove an excellent catalyst; and in the process of finding out why Pasternak has not brought it off, many other writers in the USSR might well learn how to deepen their own understanding of what constitutes full human reality. It is one of the weaknesses in Soviet culture that it is averse as yet from finding place for a book which, though confused and erratic, is trying to do something that has not previously been done, to state and penetrate a set of problems grasped in a new unifying vision. Pasternak cannot unite his ideas about life and his picture of living in novel form because he cannot sustain character developing in a complex set of interrelations; but he is a fine poet with many important intuitions and evanescent penetrations into the moment of high experience. It is easy to point out what is wrong with his novel; but one would fail as a critic unless one pointed also to its positive qualities, which appear in the incidental and glancing perceptions and in the total effect, the ultimate aim. Despite the failure to integrate character and situation in any consistent and extended way, despite the dead weight of much of Zhivago himself, the poet in Pasternak manages to convey something of his message, his deep reverence for life, his uncompromising concern for the fate of people, his joyous realisation of man's place in nature and all that that implies of human potentiality. These are not qualities to be undervalued or belittled.

Surveys & Book Reviews

VOICES OF LIFE

V. Pertsov

In May, "The Times Literary Supplement" carried a leading article on Soviet poetry, about two collections of Soviet poetry, one published in Moscow, the other in New York. The article drew a reply in "Literaturnaya Gazeta" from one of the compilers of the Soviet anthology, which we think will interest readers. The author is also the biographer and editor of the works of Mayakovsky.

IN *The Times Literary Supplement* an anonymous critic (the article is unsigned) reviews several books on Soviet poetry.*

His review is centred around the two-volume *Anthology of Russian Soviet Poetry, 1917-1957*, published by Goslitizdat last year, and another collection, published in New York and edited by a certain Vladimir Markov, entitled *Priglushennyye Golosa (Muted Voices)*.

The New York collection is apparently an attempt to give selected works by some Soviet poets; in its own way, therefore, it also is an anthology, but with a different criterion of selection, which is evident from its obviously polemical title. From the criticisms of this book in *The Times Literary Supplement* article, it is possible to form a fairly accurate idea both of the criterion of selection of the works in the American anthology (as we may call it) and of the opinions held by the author of the criticisms. It should be noted, incidentally, that his article is not simply a criticism of these two books, but lays claim to being something more, as is indicated by its title *Soviet Poetry*. Its author, snatching one or two examples here and there from the vast material of these anthologies, seeks to use them as illustrations of his own views on the development of Soviet poetry. It is a truism to say that examples are not proof; but in fact it is a question not so much of examples as of the reasons why they are used.

What does the author of the *Literary Supplement* article want to prove?

First of all he wants to convince the reader of his impartiality and of the fact that his opinions are purely æsthetic and far from being political. For example, he reproaches the compiler of the American anthology with "timidity", with a desire "to exclude almost everything that may seem to express approval of the Revolution".

In the name of "impartiality" he also reproaches the compilers of the Soviet anthology with "extreme timidity" in their selection of works and poets. Since he considers it necessary to recall that "one of the present team of anthologists" also took part in compiling the 1943 *Sbornik Stikhov* (my part is meant), it is concluded that the editors were more restricted in their selection in 1957 than in 1943. But everyone knows that after the twentieth Party Congress, correcting our past mistakes, we were in a position to include the authors of a number of excellent poems in the recent anthology.

Whatever the particular shortcomings of the recent anthology—and I could

* *The Times Literary Supplement*, May 30, 1958.

point to many more than the British critic—it is only possible to give a correct estimation of it as a whole by taking into account the ideological and artistic principles laid down by the editors as the basis for their selection and which constitute the spirit of Soviet poetry. What was the most important thing for us? It was to present the poetry of a new society as a poetry expressing the feelings and thoughts of new Soviet people, to show it in movement, and in the most typical and individually significant forms of socialist realist aesthetics.

The author of the *Literary Supplement* article sees “timidity” on the part of the compilers of the Soviet anthology, incidentally, in the fact that they have “ignored” such Acmeist poets as, for example, Nikolai Gumilev. This criticism would have been justified had the book been a history of twentieth-century poetry up till the October Revolution. Opinions differ on the contribution of the Acmeists to Russian poetry, but it would have been strange to see poems in a Soviet anthology by Gumilev, who even in the 1920s dreamt of some “India of the spirit”, which he opposed to Soviet reality. He wrote no other poems. In connection with the Acmeists, mention should be made of the new poems in the anthology by Anna Akhmatova—her famous “Courage” and others written during the last world war, in which the poetess, who began writing a long time ago and in a milieu far removed from social problems, emerged from her ivory tower and with great enthusiasm came to write on Soviet civic subjects.

The British critic also deplores the absence of the Imagists from the anthology. It would be interesting to know whom he had in mind. If it is, perhaps, Shershenevich or Kusikov, then what they have written bears no relation either to the life of Soviet society or to poetry. However, Sergei Esenin belonged to the Imagists and was one of their founders. This influenced his poems of 1919-20. By 1921, however, Esenin was developing into a Soviet poet and began to realise that Imagism was alien to him. He spoke of this with his usual sincerity: “My brother poets think art exists only as art. That it is beyond any influence from life and its ways. . . . I am sure they will forgive me if I tell them that such an approach to art is too lighthearted. . . . My brother poets have no feeling for their native country in the whole broad meaning of this word, which is why everything of theirs is so unco-ordinated. That is also why they love that dissonance, which they have absorbed with the stifling fumes of foolish affectation for the sake of affectation.”

Esenin is well represented in the Soviet anthology—from his “O Russia, spread thy wings . . .” written in 1917 to “Anna Snegina”. It would seem that the British critic was not quite just in reproaching us for not having represented the Imagists.

But no, in this case the critic is just. Esenin’s poems, in which the influence of Imagism weakened their patriotic content and their aesthetic appeal, have not found a place in this anthology. For its aim, as we have remarked, was to show the “other strength” of Soviet Russia, the appearance of the new man and of the poetry of Soviet society. The British critic either does not or does not want to understand this aim and sees “timidity” where there is only loyalty to principle. He writes: “Antokolsky’s moving poem in memory of his son, who was killed in the war, is included in part in the Soviet collection, but, touching though it is in some of its details, it is on a far lower poetical level than the group of poems, largely on French themes, which he wrote in the late 1920s.”

I do not deny that in this group by Antokolsky there is skilful and even magnificent verse, but much of it lacks the genuine originality of a poet of Soviet society. Both in imagery and poetic expression these verses resemble the French “Parnassians”, the symbolists. Sergei Vasiliev underlined this fact in the title of his witty parody on Pavel Antokolsky, called “The Bourbons

of the Sorbonne". It is characteristic that in his later poetry about the French Revolution, the Paris Commune and contemporary Soviet life Pavel Antokolsky resolutely began to cut out "Paul d'Antocole", whose likeness to the usual patterns is so dear to the critic of that old-fashioned paper *The Times*, which so admires everything traditional.

In our anthology, however, we preferred the unusual, that is to say the future. In Antokolsky's poem "Son", which carries on the great classical tradition, there is a valuable unlikeness, there is that note of tragedy, which is characteristic of the historical optimism of Soviet literature. That is why this poem has been given an honourable place in the anthology of Soviet poetry.

The British critic is dissatisfied with our choice of works by such poets as Boris Pasternak, Nikolai Zabolotsky and Leonid Martynov. They are very different poets and the demand made on each is a special one; they do not complement one another. From what we have said about Esenin and Antokolsky, it is easy to understand the principles that guided us in our choice. The most important thing was to catch the "unlikeness", taking into account the fact that these poets also lived and wrote in the conditions of Soviet society. Leonid Martynov had some interesting things to say about the "seventh sense" fostered in the people of our country—"the ability to see the future alive".

It is not easy to foresee how the artist learns "to see the future alive"—later poems do not always turn out to be more clear-sighted. I believe Leonid Martynov's earlier historical poems were born of a greater fervour of ideas and are more original as works of art. The reason for this is, I think, that they have a better feeling for place and time in a country where the future is not only seen but is made to come alive.

If the critic has eyes in the back of his head he is only able to see the past in art, not the future. Not unsurprisingly, the *Times* critic rates Nikolai Zabolotsky's first collection of poems, "Stolbtsy" (Columns) (which contains much that is childishly pretentious), higher than his present maturity arrived at slowly, which we have tried to show in the anthology: from the "classical" raptures over imaginary statehood to themes of new socialist humanity, which are reminiscent of Nekrasov's stirring tones. It is a pity that "The Old Actress" was not included. It is much more profound in thought than his "Ugly Young Girl". This, incidentally, is an example of an unsuccessful choice of poem in the anthology. However, it is not these real failings which attract the attention of *The Times*. "Stolbtsy", the British critic writes, "is not even listed in the bibliography of the Soviet anthology." It is a disappointing inaccuracy, but is it entirely accidental? For on page 756 of Volume II of the anthology, in the bibliography on Zabolotsky is written: "First book of verse, 'Stolbtsy', was published in Leningrad in 1929." But, in fact, there are no poems from this book in the anthology. Why not? For the same reasons that Antokolsky's "The Bourbons of the Sorbonne" is not included. Zabolotsky's early poems are not independent. The *Times* critic rightly points out their dependence on Khlebnikov, saying that Khlebnikov "played the part of Pound to Mayakovsky's Eliot in the Futurist movement and died miserably with little finished work to his credit".

Of course the comparison between Khlebnikov and Mayakovsky and Pound and Eliot does not stand up to criticism.

The point, however, is not his unfortunate analogy, but rather the fact that he quite rightly felt the tragedy of Khlebnikov's fate as an artist, from which even his talent did not save him. Yet surely the same fate awaited Zabolotsky if he had not managed to find a way out of his "Columns". Why, then, does the *Times* critic, while understanding Khlebnikov in retrospect, lose all sense of perspective with regard to Zabolotsky? What is the meaning of his delight

in the fact that verses from “Stolbtsy”, which are missing from the Soviet anthology, are given a great deal of space in the American one? Surely this reveals a specific approach—æsthetically limited and consequently harmful to the great literature of our age—to poetry and to the selection of the poems in the American anthology, appropriately called “Muted Voices”.

It is true that in the collection of selected works of Soviet poetry we have consciously muted whatever is not independent in the poet's work, whatever, in the final analysis, is unrelated to the reality in which he lives, which must be expressed in the form if he is a real artist. The general exists in the particular and through the particular—this is an axiom of dialectics. In each one of our poets we appreciate “the non-general expression of the person”, which appears whenever the poet reflects and affirms in his poetry whatever is *general and Soviet*.

In our poetry the voices of life are the most appreciated and the most often heard. No wonder that to this day Mayakovsky speaks out “at the top of his voice”.

It is commendable that the *Times* critic understands the importance of Mayakovsky and his role in modern poetry. “Mayakovsky's sardonic view of France and America was in no sense forced”, he writes. But since he is so objective he cannot disregard that criterion of quality which Mayakovsky himself formulated when he spoke against publishing “simply ‘good’ verses”: “I personally test my poems by two *genre* pictures: if all the poets should rise up from their graves they would have to say: ‘There weren't such poems in our day; we never knew such poems and did not know how to write them’; if the past should rise up from the grave—the Whites and the restoration—my verse would have to be sought out and destroyed for the great harm it does the Whites. The proportion between these two is that of the quality of my verse.”

There is food for thought here. Our poetic stars may differ in strength and magnitude, but it should be clear immediately from their light—their own light, not a reflected one—that they belong to our Soviet galaxy.

In his article the British critic speaks like a judge of what is refined—“arbiter eleganciorum”. However, despite his desire to be objective, his turn of mind inevitably makes him lean towards the American anthology. This is why he does not even notice the strong valedictory spirit in Vladimir Lugovsky's poems; for no one can deny that there are things of great poetical importance in his books *Mid-Century* and *Blue Spring* and that modern life is illumined in them from an unexpected angle. Nor did the British critic perceive the modest, severe glow of Yaroslav Smelyakov's poems about the first five-year plan and about “Russia's sweet and beautiful young girls”. There is not a word about these poets in his article. Apparently he found difficulty in squeezing out a single, strangely approving, sentence about Tvardovsky, pedantically linking him to the old—Old English—literary tradition.

For him, Pasternak is a light in the window. He disagrees with the way in which Pasternak is represented in our anthology. Indeed, the collection of Soviet poetry does include some of his poems which reflect the Soviet period. However, the British critic laments that Pasternak's recent verses on New Testament themes and those devoted to Mary Magdalene are not included. But what connection can there be between an anthology of new art by poets of a new life and Pasternak's religious epigonic poems, which smell of mothballs from the trunk of Symbolist images of 1908-10?

In order to judge trends in Soviet poetry correctly, the *Literary Supplement* critic should understand that art is not static, but like everything else in the world is moving forward. The realm of poetry is not shut in upon itself, “outside any influence from life and its ways”—this remark of Esenin's to the

Imagists should be readdressed to him. Some of his statements and criticisms contradict his basic position, preventing him from understanding what is new in art.

What is the meaning of and the reason for this ? The answer may be found in the British critic's attempt to dissemble and in what stands out in almost every paragraph of his article—in politics, in crude politics, hostile to everything that is new not only in art, but in life as well, in the politics which strive to preserve the old and out-of-date under the banner of allegedly high æsthetic demands. It is not surprising that life takes its revenge on him for this by depriving him of an understanding of, and a taste for, the development of poetry, that is by denying him those qualities without which a critic is unable to help the reader to appreciate what is new in modern Russian poetry with its profoundly national Soviet originality.

Literaturnaya Gazeta, Sept. 9, 1958.

Translated by J.M.W. Abridged.

ENGLISH BOOKS ON CHEKHOV

B. Gilenson

A TRADITION of Chekhov studies started in England at the beginning of the century when, after the first collection of his stories had been published in 1903, translations of his works began to appear almost yearly.¹ Despite the great diversity of these books on Chekhov published in England before the second world war, which were unanimous in recognising his great literary merits, the great majority of them reflected one of two trends peculiar to British criticism of Chekhov.

While they mainly studied the literary aspect of Chekhov's work and paid tribute to his ability to describe the hidden movements of the human soul, to convey "mood" and "atmosphere", and to give poetic descriptions of the countryside, British literary critics, as a rule, did not explore the ideological content of his books. This can partly be explained by the view which used to be current in the West, that Chekhov as an artist was indifferent to the social struggle of his times. The value of particular comments on the writer's skill, otherwise true in themselves, was reduced by this incorrect interpretation of his method. Chekhov was described as a modernist, or a naturalist, or an impressionist, or simply as a writer for the select few.

In particular, the article on Chekhov in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1947), which is noted for its conservatism, is an example of this trend. It declares Chekhov to be a writer who does not create living images, but only the vague moods of weak-willed and indeterminate people, "like Hamlet".

Another trend, which is now correctly called "the Chekhov legend", was directly linked with this one. Its real originator was the reactionary Russian critic Lev Shestov, whose essay on Chekhov was translated into English (1916) and had considerable influence on bourgeois criticism. According to Shestov's interpretation, Chekhov was a hopeless pessimist. D. Merezhkovsky and Janko Lavrin similarly played a sorry part in spreading this legend.

In England itself, of course, for example among the realist writers, correct

¹ According to the bibliography of English editions of Chekhov's works, New York, 1949, seventy-eight books on Chekhov had been registered in England at that time. His stories had been published forty-six times, plays thirteen times, letters and diaries seven times; in addition his works had been included in six anthologies. Particular interest was shown in Chekhov in Britain after the first world war.

and sober judgments were quite often expressed. Thus Arnold Bennett said that Chekhov had achieved absolute realism, and Bernard Shaw saw in his plays a stern condemnation of a society of idlers and parasites.

It is gratifying to note that fruitful trends have appeared in Britain in the post-war years, which can be considered as a new stage in English literary criticism of Chekhov. A number of factors have favoured this development : a deeper interest in the culture and literature of our country, an improvement in the translation of Chekhov's main works, the publication of his diaries and correspondence and of new memoir material, and acquaintance with books by Soviet critics.

In 1947 W. Bruford published his *Chekhov and his Russia*.² His aim was "to throw light both on Chekhov and on Russia, by trying to see Russia through Chekhov's eyes and to see Chekhov as the product of a particular age and country". Bruford's book is a definite step forward compared with former works with a subjective interpretation, if only because it tells the English reader in an interesting and reliable way about Chekhov's everyday life. Attention should be paid to the special map of Chekhov's travels about Russia, compiled by the author, which gives a good idea of when and where Chekhov collected his material for his works.

While his book contains quite a few just observations, a number of Bruford's conclusions should not pass unchallenged. For example, Chekhov, a deeply national writer and a democrat who created unforgettable scenes of the Russian countryside and portraits of Russian people, reflected, in Bruford's opinion, "the moods of the landowning aristocracy and intelligentsia", who saw their ideal in "the cultural, spiritual and scientific treasures of western civilisation".

Ronald Hingley's book on Chekhov,³ published in 1950, is notable in that its author believes he must finally scotch the notorious "Chekhov legend". "Almost everyone", he says, "who writes about Chekhov today has to begin by protesting against a widespread misconception embodied in such phrases as 'a gentle, suffering soul', and 'a wise observer with a wistful smile and an aching heart'." Unlike Bruford, Hingley makes considerable use of Soviet works on Chekhov and their influence is noticeable in his book.

The most valuable part of Hingley's book is his analysis of Chekhov as a short story writer. He shows clearly how masterpieces like *Gooseberries* and *The Man in the Case* grew out of Antosha Chekhonte's early stories. Hingley correctly points out that Chekhov's originality as a storyteller and playwright can clearly be seen in his ability to express the truth of life accurately and succinctly, in such a way that great social purpose is revealed behind the trivialities of everyday life. Nevertheless Hingley, like Bruford, often identifies Chekhov's views with those of his characters, forgetting that the writer, while sincerely admiring the best of them, always stands above them and sees farther than his characters.

David Magarshack, the translator and specialist in Russian literature, has published two interesting works on Chekhov. His first book, *Chekhov The Dramatist*,⁴ is undoubtedly the most interesting study in English in this field.

Magarshack distinguishes three periods in the development of Chekhov as a dramatist. The first period of "direct action" plays begins with the early vaudevilles and ends with *Ivanov*. Magarshack considers that the play *The Wood Demon* belongs to the "transition period", after which begins the period of "indirect action" plays, when Chekhov wrote *The Seagull*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Three Sisters* and *The Cherry Orchard*. He must be given due credit—he finely and artistically reveals the nature of Chekhov's craftsman-

² W. Bruford: *Chekhov and his Russia. A sociological study*. London, 1947.

³ Ronald Hingley: *Chekhov. A biographical and critical study*. London, 1950.

⁴ D. Magarshack: *Chekhov the Dramatist*. London, 1952.

ship, illustrating the diversity of his artistic methods with numerous examples, comparing variants of them and separate works, discussing the prototypes of Chekhov's characters, penetrating the writer's working laboratory.

It is an interesting idea that Chekhov "was a born dramatist". Magarshack discloses purely dramatic elements in the development of the subject matter, in the intricacies of the dialogue, and in the characteristic neatness of Chekhov's short stories. He pays special attention to an analysis of the "architecture" of Chekhov's plays. Furthermore, he notes that Chekhov subordinated his art to one purpose, which determined all his searchings—reflection of the truth of life.

Magarshack's book continues the polemic with the "Chekhov legend". "The greatest mistake English and American producers of Chekhov's plays have been making", he writes, "is to accept the view that Chekhov's drama is essentially a drama of frustration." He calls *Uncle Vanya* a play of "truth and hope". It is a pity, though, that he gives so little space to describing the ideological content of Chekhov's plays; it would have helped reveal more fully both the conditions in which Chekhov's artistic method was evolved and the original features of his dramatic conflicts. Other parts of the book also invite criticism. For example, Magarshack compares Chekhov's plays with the ancient Greek drama. Surely it would have been more useful to compare them with the plays of Gogol and Turgenev, then Chekhov's originality would have been seen as a logical development of the tradition of Russian classical play writing.

D. Magarshack's second book on Chekhov⁵ is a detailed biography, in which he makes considerable use of original sources, and of those of Chekhov's letters which have recently been published in the Soviet Union. The book's merit lies in its truthful reflection of Chekhov as a man; it is free from the many subjective glosses which are a feature of some English works on this subject.

Magarshack gives a detailed description of the environment in which Chekhov lived, shows his family circle, tells how from his childhood he was filled with an ardent desire for justice, and how his talent developed in conflict with stern reality. His social work, his journey to Sakhalin and his attitude to the Dreyfus affair are shown in detail. The story of the writing of Chekhov's main works is reliably traced. On the whole Magarshack justly assesses Chekhov's literary and æsthetic views; but it is a pity that, in speaking of his outlook on life, he relies solely on Chekhov's own words, and uses little material from his written works.

In 1957 Bruford's second book on Chekhov, a short essay on his life and work, was published in the critical and biographical series now appearing in England, "Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought".⁶ The book is intended for a broad public and gives a general idea of Chekhov's work, drawing on important material accumulated in England. Bruford is acquainted with the work of Soviet literary critics, A. Derman, S. Balukhaty and V. Ermilov for example, and he often refers to them, sometimes entering into argument with them.

In his preface Bruford comments on the great interest in Chekhov among English writers, who are strongly influenced by his artistic style. He also acknowledges as groundless the view, so long held in England, of Chekhov as a pessimist who depicted only useless and weak people.

The book is in three parts. The first, devoted to Chekhov's early works, traces his growth as a writer, beginning with his contributions to the humour magazines of the 'eighties at a time of political reaction and censorship. "Both

⁵ D. Magarshack: *Chekhov, a Life*. London, 1952.

⁶ W. Bruford: *Anton Chekhov*. London, 1957.

in his realism and in his humane sympathy Chekhov was of course continuing a Russian literary tradition, under the direct influence of Gogol and Goncharov, Turgeniev and Tolstoy.”

Bruford observes that elements of criticism of Russian society appeared even in Chekhov's early works, like *A Chameleon*, *Sergeant Prishibeov*, *Fat and Thin*, although he unjustly reproaches Soviet writers on Chekhov with exaggerating his social criticism.

Bruford rightly considers that the basic features of Chekhov's artistic method, developed further in his work of the 'nineties and early years of this century, were already taking shape in his early writing. He sees Chekhov's special contribution as a writer in his laconic style and elegance of form, in his ability to convey the barely perceptible shades of experience and mood and to reveal his characters through their behaviour, and finally in his skilful pictures of the countryside which harmonise with a person's emotional state. Having noted the clearly marked speech habits of Chekhov's characters in his early stories, Bruford suggests that in his later stories and plays the speech of Chekhov's characters loses its individual touches and becomes more closely similar to the writer's own idiom. It is difficult to agree with this.

In the part on Chekhov's mature period of writing, which Bruford believes began with the story *Name Day*, what he calls the typical Chekhov style is examined. In Chekhov's later stories and tales, Bruford notes, two trends predominate—the psychological (the story *A Nervous Breakdown*) and the sociological (*Peasants* and *In the Ravine*), which sometimes complement one another (*Ward No. 6*). It is significant that in his assessment of *Ward No. 6* Bruford makes use of Lenin's evaluation of this work, and rightly considers it one of the most daring condemnations to be found in Chekhov's stories, conveying as it does “the stifling atmosphere” of Russian society. Special attention is paid in this book to such stories as *Peasants* and *In the Ravine* (which contain a realistic picture of peasant life), although in describing these works—and not only these—the author hardly ever speaks of the exposure of the bourgeois, property-owning and tradesmen's world, which constitutes the pathos of Chekhov's writing. Among the facts concerning Chekhov's ideological development in the 'nineties, Bruford mentions how Chekhov came to reject the idea of “Tolstoyism” and his break with Suvorin.

In his analysis of Chekhov's play writing, Bruford, like Magarshack, notes that there were dramatic elements in his early stories, in which the action fell into a number of scenes and in which the subject itself was often of a “vaudeville” nature. In the main, Bruford examines Chekhov's plays from the point of view of their structure; his analysis of their ideological content is less successful. This is particularly true of his treatment of *The Cherry Orchard*.

In speaking of the human pathos in Chekhov's play writing which raises universal human problems, Bruford regards it as a phenomenon of world-wide importance. He makes special mention of his calls to creative work (*Uncle Vanya*) and of his thoughts on great art (*The Seagull*). Bruford recognises the prophetic meaning of Tusenbach's words about “the healthy, strong storm”, but at the same time puts forward the idea that Soviet critics exaggerate Chekhov's social optimism. This is apparently because he does not take into consideration the influence of the social atmosphere on the writer, and does not understand that that period before the storm which preceded the Russian revolution of 1905 was the basis for those new moods of hope in the future which colour Chekhov's works like *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Betrothed*.

However, the question of Chekhov's outlook on life is, in its general outline, correctly decided. Bruford is right in what he says about Chekhov's dislike of doctrinairism, about his faith in progress and science, and about his

ideal of “a free and natural life”. Only a few of his formulations need to be criticised—although, for example, he calls Chekhov “an incorrigible liberal humanist”, Bruford nevertheless links him with bourgeois liberalism, which was an object of caustic mockery to Chekhov.

Bruford’s judgment of Chekhov’s artistic method is rather contradictory. Although he speaks frequently of Chekhov’s realism, he tries all the same to draw him close to modernistic trends. It is also impossible to agree with his statement that Chekhov tried to write his plays in the spirit of “psychological naturalism”, and with his view that Chekhov’s desire not to moralise on the events taking place in his works is an expression of “objectivism, existing in a disillusioned naturalistic age”. True, Bruford limits this to Chekhov’s early writings.

On the whole Bruford’s book and the others mentioned above show, despite their shortcomings, that British specialists have achieved undoubted successes in their study of the great Russian writer.

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Translated by J.M.W.

Soviet Psychiatry

Brian Kirman

CONSIDERABLE contributions to psychiatry were made by Russian workers in the pre-revolutionary period. The names of Korsakow, Betz, Bechterew and many other workers are well known in the fields of psychiatry and neurology, while the work of the great Russian neurophysiologist Pavlov is only now beginning to make an impact on western psychiatric practice. Psychologists in Britain are aware of the studies of Luria in the Soviet Union on perception and its disorders. In the main, however, information about Soviet psychiatry has been very scanty in this country. The publication of the book *Soviet Psychiatry*, by Joseph Wortis, in 1950 (Baltimore), helped to make good the deficit, and more recently the increasing availability of translations published by Pergamon Press has helped to bridge the gap.

Special interest attaches to Soviet psychiatry, since this branch of medicine is necessarily much influenced in its development by social and philosophical considerations. In tsarist times protagonists of a materialist outlook in psychology and psychiatry were liable to incur disfavour and lack of promotion. By contrast Pavlov’s efforts to provide a physiological understanding of the functioning of the brain and of mental processes were singled out for special support by the Soviet government shortly after the revolution. A recent example of the impact on psychiatry of ideological differences was the prohibition in the Soviet Union of the operation of leucotomy in 1950. In the field of mental deficiency the Soviet attitude has been characterised by opposition to the notion of a constant intelligence quotient, determined exclusively or almost entirely by genetic factors.

In view of these special features of Soviet psychiatry any new writing on the subject is turned to with great interest. While there have been numerous publications on special aspects of the subject, such as A. G. Ivanov-Smolensky’s account of the role of conditioning in the production and treatment of neuroses, in his *Essays on the Patho-physiology of Higher Nervous Activity* (Moscow, 1954), there seemed to be a shortage of authoritative and comprehensive texts. This fact is possibly to some extent a reflection of the, at times, very heated controversies which have gone on in the past two decades on a

number of key issues related to psychiatry ; the role of heredity, the Lysenko controversy, the legitimacy of "psycho-surgery", the place of Pavlov's work, the value of sleep therapy. Another factor which may have a bearing on the more limited extent of Soviet psychiatric literature is the tendency in the Soviet Union to consider that the major role in the prevention of minor mental disorders, psychopathy and delinquency is to be played by social and educational agencies rather than by psychiatry *per se*.

The new text-book of psychiatry for medical students, *Uchebnik Psikhiiatrii* (1958), by O. V. Kerbikov, N. I. Ozeretsky, E. A. Popov and A. V. Snezhnevsky, is, for the above reasons, of great interest. This book appears to be a successor to the collection of lectures by Professor Kerbikov, published in 1955, *Lektsii po Psikhiiatrii* (Moscow). Professor Kerbikov became well known to psychiatrists during his recent visit to this country, when he made an impression by his detailed knowledge of the history of psychiatry. Ozeretsky is best known in this country for his work on the assessment of motor function; his death occurred before the publication of the book. Kerbikov, Ozeretsky and Snezhnevsky were members of the Soviet delegation to the World Congress on Mental Health which took place in Canada in 1954. At that congress Snezhnevsky put forward a somewhat heterodox view, which does not seem to have been supported by subsequent developments, that schizophrenia might be due to a virus infection.

An interesting piece of information provided about Soviet books is the size of the edition. In the case of the new text-book on psychiatry this amounts to 45,000, a figure much higher than that to which we are accustomed here for similar works. This gives some indication of the numbers of medical students who are now expected to become familiar with psychiatry. The number of doctors in the Soviet Union dealing with mental illness has increased very markedly and visitors are impressed by the very generous medical staffing of mental hospitals, as also by the smallness of the wards, separate rooms being provided for numbers of patients varying from one to six. In addition to working in mental hospitals, psychiatrists are also employed in the polyclinics, where they provide a clinic and domestic service, and also in children's clinics, in forensic cases, and in the assessment of working capacity. As the authors of the text-book point out, the form of psychiatric service provided in any country depends on the material level of society and on the prevailing ideology. It is perhaps a characteristic of the socialist structure of society that the time of the psychiatrist should be devoted in part to an assessment of working capacity. The assumption implicit in this assessment is that if the psychiatrist finds on discharging his patient from hospital, or after out-patient treatment, that he is fit for employment, even if in a reduced capacity, suitable employment will be found for him. It is clear that attainment of this aim is greatly facilitated in an economy in which there is an ever-present shortage of labour.

Another aspect of Soviet psychiatry which will impress the visitor or the reader of the text-book is the emphasis on active treatment. To those accustomed to statistical evaluation of success in treatment and to controlled trials, Soviet enthusiasm for therapy may seem a little naïve at times. On the other hand, with adequate staffing, small units and individual attention, it may be that the risk of chronic institutionalisation is much reduced, especially when the prospect of employment after discharge is good.

As might be expected in Soviet psychiatry, the emphasis is on material and environmental factors in the production of disease. While the role of genetic factors and constitution is admitted, it is claimed for example that puerperal psychosis (that is mental illness occurring in connection with childbirth) has fallen together with the decrease in incidence of puerperal sepsis (that is

infection occurring in childbirth). This is advanced as an argument in favour of the view that the environmental component is more important than hereditary factors in determining some diseases.

Again, as might be expected, psychosis, severe mental illness, is seen as a disordered reflection of the real world. Disease symptoms in psychosis are interpreted as evidence of dysfunction of the brain, essentially as a disturbance of conditioned reflex mechanisms. The Pavlovian concept of levels of nervous activity and of generalisation is employed. The difficulty in *delirium tremens*, for example, in perception of real stimuli, which leads to false images, e.g. of pink elephants, is looked upon as a defect in primary perception, at a lower level of nervous activity. In paranoia, however, which is often characterised by delusions of persecution and "ideas of reference", i.e. the notion that irrelevant and chance happenings have some special and peculiar significance for oneself, there is a disturbance of a higher level of nervous activity essential to judgment, while the lower levels of simple perception remain relatively intact. This higher level of human nervous activity is associated with speech, with Pavlov's "second signalling system". The text-book is enriched by a reproduction of a patient-artist's hallucinations, which include a number of wild animals against the ordinary background of the ward.

Kerbikov and his colleagues emphasise that in all disturbance of the mind there must be a chemico-physical or anatomical basis for this in the brain, and that in order to understand the development and treatment of mental illness it is essential to have a good grasp of general medicine. At the same time they point out that the organism is a unit and that, therefore, the mind plays an important part in all illnesses and that the mental state of the patient must be taken into account in carrying out treatment for ordinary ailments.

This text-book may seem almost disappointingly orthodox to some readers who were expecting a more revolutionary approach to the treatment of mental disease. This feature is, in part, due to the fact that the authors are not concerned primarily with explaining to the medical student those aspects of the social system which are important in the prevention of mental illness or which assist in the rehabilitation of the mental patient. They assume that the student is already acquainted with these. An interesting pointer to the Soviet attitude is, however, provided by Professor Kerbikov's remarks on the sending of patients to mental hospitals. He says that it is undesirable to deceive the patient in this matter, since if he is not warned that this step is being taken, and he suddenly finds himself in a psychiatric hospital, then his mental state may be worsened and his faith in his medical advisers weakened. Unfortunately this elementary rule is not always followed by those responsible for sending mental patients to hospital in this country.

A short review of the psychiatrist's responsibility in legal matters is given. This includes the provision of an opinion on the accused's state of mind at the time of commission of an offence (as in Britain, drunkenness does not reduce responsibility) and also fitness to plead. A psychiatric opinion can be obtained at the instance of relatives, of the administration of the accused's place of work, or of the accused himself.

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DIVERGENT TRIO

The Privalov Fortune. D. Mamin-Sibiryak. (FLPH, 473 pp., unpriced.)

The Three. Maxim Gorky. (FLPH, 470 pp., unpriced.)

Mirgorod. N. Gogol. (FLPH, 294 pp., unpriced.)

THREE writers widely divergent in their material and in their general attack are represented in these new translations from the Foreign Languages Publishing House.

Mamin-Sibiryak (1852-1912) conceived a multi-volume saga of the Urals, in which he would show the colossal panorama of their industrial development over a lengthy period. In this chain of novels *The Privalov Fortune* was to stand as the concluding link: the reader was to realise that the huge industrial empire built up on slave labour had brought about nothing but a strengthening of the foundations of the insane extravagance of a few ruling-class owners. The author failed to carry out his original intention, but in *The Privalov Fortune* his final solution seems to emerge as a sort of utopian-socialist dream of benevolent patriarch-capitalists organising near-Owenite concerns under the lash of ancestral guilt. In the course of the novel the monstrous mining undertakings, yielding their millions out of the unrewarded toil of the serfs, are shown as serving merely to keep alive a squalid, useless and mindless degeneracy on the part of the owners and trustees, and interminable Chinese puzzles of litigation concerning ownership and management keep a steady flow of revenue directed into the pockets of venal state officials, corrupt lawyers and expensive courtesans.

There are no real characters, only feckless or ineffectual shadows moving about in the general nightmare; the action drifts foggily, and the reader is left with only a deep impression of sprawling waste, degeneracy, and the hopelessness of Mamin-Sibiryak's well-intentioned solution. The translation falters at times, one suspects with boredom. "It's all so involved", Marya sighed. . . . "He makes up his mind to go somewhere and ends up somewhere else." Quite.

In contrast, the presentation of the material in Maxim Gorky's best work cannot be called elusive or blurred. His prose is direct and purposeful, and if there is a challenge to a translator it lies in the rendering of the incisive talk that is incessantly thrown about among the characters. Margaret Wettlin has brought it off brilliantly in her version of *The Three*. She gives us the speech of living people in whom we can believe, instead of the wooden, ankylosed lurchings approaching idiocy which are too often Russian conversation according to the translating "Establishment". This story of the turbulent lives of three youths moves at great speed. The struggle of each to preserve his own particular integrity in the corrupt world of pre-1905 Russia, a "garbage-heap in which people wriggle like worms", is savage, and there is savage social comment in the fate of the central figure, Ilya Lunyev, who, although a murderer, is fiercely conscious of being greater than the things which destroy him. This is a moving and absorbing book, and a magnificent translation.

After such an exhilarating excursion it is good to pause awhile from social satire and relax with Gogol's *Mirgorod*, con-

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taining matter as diverse as the familiar and famous *Taras Bulba*, the two preposterous, litigious Ivans, and *Viy*, that fantastic folk-legend. For the full flavour of Gogol's romance and his peculiar brand of desperate humour the reader really needs the Russian, or some acquaintance with those delightful Ukrainian people who seem to know all his works by heart. This translation, although a little uncomfortable in places with the shorter stories, is fortunately very happy with *Taras Bulba*, which of course takes up the greater part of the volume. The design and illustrations are very good (after immediate destruction of the sickly mid-nineteenth-century dust-cover), and it is altogether a book to be possessed and not merely borrowed.

W. S. BAILEY.

TWO NEW NOVELS

Buse and Her Sisters. Ieva Simonaityte, trans. by Eve Manning. (FLPH, 1958, 296 pp., unpriced.)

The House on the Square. E. Kazakevich, trans. by Martin Parker. (FLPH, 1958, 520 pp., unpriced.)

THE scene of both these novels is laid in Germany, the first in that corner of East Prussia and Lithuania that used to be known as Memel and was one of the international trouble spots between the wars, and the other in a border district in the Soviet zone of occupation in Germany. *Buse and Her Sisters* is about the "bad old days" while *The House on the Square* looks forward and treats of the changes in post-war eastern Germany.

Miss Simonaityte's portrait of the tight-fisted, scheming, miserly Lithuanian peasant woman, Buse, climbing from poverty to wealth on the backs of her sisters, her neighbours and her farm workers, is a ruthless picture of the inhumanity of kulak cupidity. One feels that her downfall at the hands of her equally rapacious daughter-in-law, leaping on Buse's savings into gentility, is just retribution; there is no room for a spark of sympathy. If anything the picture is too ruthless and the colours are too thick. The time scale is long, and though the book is relatively short the reader has had more than enough of Buse and her kind by the end. But that end is final, for the story closes with a brief epilogue: "Today there are no more masters in Benagiai. All trace of them is gone and their memory has faded. . . ." The novel is an epitaph for a past phase in the life of Lithuania.

Kazakevich's story is more a prologue to something new, though it is in fact the sequel to his earlier novel *Spring on the Oder*. It is an interesting story, for it deals with an aspect of the world scene that is little known and less understood. The theme is the effort of a Soviet com-

mandant in a small German town to carry out, in the first years after the war, the tasks of extirpating Nazism and encouraging democracy in Germany. Kazakevich is not wholly successful. The colour contrasts are often too sharp; and the whole story, though long and full of episode, seems at times schematic and even artificial. None the less it has moments of dramatic tension. There are not unconvincing attempts to picture the downward slide of a deserter, and to show the deleterious effect of the "cult of personality" at the lower levels of the chain of military command. Some of the German characters are portrayed sympathetically and are believable, but the Americans are caricatures; on the other hand the Soviet characters are well differentiated, if too often presented only skin deep.

For all that *The House on the Square* is worth reading; it deals with positive and optimistic themes, in contrast to the preoccupation with failure and decay that is met so often. Kazakevich, I think, has tackled the more difficult job, for it seems to me harder to write a convincing novel about success than about failure and tragedy.

The translation calls for a word. It is a pity that so many of these FLPH translations are stodgy, lacking the literary quality and felicitous choice of word that brighten the picture and illumine the story. With these two novels there is a feeling of looking through smoked glasses. The tone of the story-telling is blurred. It is a comment on Miss Simonaityte's story that even so it stands up quite well to the double translation from Lithuanian to English via Russian.

H.C.C.

AN INTRODUCTION TO RUSSIAN ART

Istoriya russkogo iskusstva (History of Russian Art), USSR Academy of Art. Vol. I. (Iskusstvo, 1957, 481 pp., 25r 95k.)

IN contrast with the many-volumed history of Russian art being published by the USSR Academy of Sciences under the editorship of I. E. Grabar, which will come to rank as the standard work to be consulted by scholars and art lovers, the present history is intended to serve as a textbook for students studying in the colleges of art throughout the USSR. The new approach involved is the first of its kind to have been attempted in the USSR, and a very great deal of information is well presented in the 479 pages of text, generously supplemented with 253 pages of plates, many carrying two or even three illustrations, augmented by seventy-two line drawings. The text is the work of thirteen authors; these are N. N. Voronin, I. E. Danilova, A. F. Korostin, V. A.

Prishkov, A. N. Savinov, G. V. Yidkov, G. G. Grimm, M. M. Rakova, I. T. Schmidt, M. B. Milotvorskaya, N. G. Mashkovtzev, I. A. Barteniev and T. N. Gorina, working under the joint editorship of N. G. Mashkovtzev and A. F. Korostin, both corresponding members of the USSR Academy of Art. This method inevitably results in a little overlapping, but the collaboration is on the whole a happy one, and the easy flow of the story is not seriously interrupted by the occasional need to return to a dropped thread. It has the advantage of enabling an expert to deal with each period and type of art, but it perforce results in the text being divided into many sections; there are indeed as many as nine major ones, and these are subdivided into fifty-six chapters.

The volume traces the history of Russian painting, sculpture, architecture and carving, to quote from its foreword, from "the dawn of feudalism in Russia to the October Revolution"; in practice, the period covered dates from the tenth century to the third quarter of the nineteenth. When all due allowance has been made for the political unrest of the late nineteenth century, this closing date can scarcely be accepted as corresponding with the outbreak of the October Revolution, and unless the second volume—no details of which are given in the present book—picks up the story with the 1880s many painters of very considerable significance will have been omitted from an otherwise thoroughly comprehensive account of pre-revolution Russian art. The names of Vrubl (1856-1910) and Repin (1844-1930) are indeed mentioned in the present volume, but their works are not discussed in it, while artists as important as Serov (1865-1911), Levitan (1861-1900), Makovski (1869-1915), and the entire group of "World of Art" painters (to mention only the more obvious) are not referred to here. It is to be hoped that these important artists will be discussed in the opening chapters of the second volume of this very informative history.

The book has been primarily written for the use of practising artists, and it is therefore very much concerned with the general nature of the works discussed, that is to say with their colour, the material in which they were fashioned and the technical treatment. Each section is prefaced by a historical sketch of the period, the events being interpreted in the light of Soviet ideology and being as a result more concerned with social than with political history. The chapters on art history which follow contain much valuable factual information, a great deal of which is not easily available elsewhere. The earlier architectural sections are thus especially important, for they contain much new information derived from the results of recent excavations. Similarly

the sections on secular painting contain material which is new to western readers, for the works of certain minor painters are presented here for the first time. At times, however, the account of nineteenth-century painting tends to devote too much attention to subject matter and not enough to artistic merit; thus, to give but one example, the painter Fedotov, who is but a minor master in spite of the great interest that his work has for the social historian, is given twelve pages of text, while the account of the development of the admirable eighteenth-century portraitist Levitsky occupies only four. But this is perhaps a matter of taste and opinion rather than of fact and the criticism just expressed does not detract from the value of the book as a whole. In spite of the mass of specialised and detailed information that it contains, it is extremely readable. The authors have handled their material on broad lines and there could be no better introduction to the study of Russian art, whether for the art lover or technician, than the present work.

The line drawings are of particular interest; the plates are well selected, generous in number and, if not always of the highest quality, invariably adequate. The inclusion in their captions of page references to the text is an innovation in Soviet book production which is to be commended. So too is the inclusion in the text of information regarding the exact whereabouts of the works discussed. There is an index, compiled by N. P. Kiselev; the bibliography, by A. F. Korostin, is excellent for its purpose.

T. TALBOT-RICE.

CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS

Drawings by Soviet Children. (FLPH, 1957. Distributed by Central Books Ltd., 21/-.)

THIS interesting book (with introduction and captions in English) is timely. Most of us working in this field of art education have looked for a publication showing what is being done by Soviet children. We have had little to inform us. There was the exhibition of Soviet children's art presented by the *Sunday Pictorial* some three years ago and we have been able to see some Soviet paintings in the international child art exhibition, sponsored by the *Daily Worker*, now touring England. But for reproductions of Soviet examples one looks almost in vain in the books on child art in English. Two brush drawings by Russian children were reproduced in Tomlinson's *Picture Making by Children* (1934) and reappear in the revised edition (1950). For the rest, one must turn to occasional reproductions in Soviet journals and to the Indian *Shankar's Weekly* annual children's com-

petition numbers for Soviet prizewinning entries. So this book fills a real gap.

Well produced, with ninety illustrations mostly in colour, it gives many more works by children of eleven years and over (seventy-five out of ninety) than of the infant/junior ages. This has been the tendency in collections of Soviet children's work exhibited here. It contrasts with most British child art exhibitions. The British selectors' love of the delightful qualities of young children's conceptual drawing leads to the majority of works being by these younger children.

The introduction provides the reason for this difference. "It is in the kindergartens . . . that Soviet children begin to acquire their first habits in art. A more serious study . . . comes with the first form in school—when children are seven years old. Drawing is part of the curriculum in the first six forms. Here they are taught the fundamentals of realistic drawing by specially trained teachers." Most art educationists in this country would consider seven years far too young for introducing this kind of realistic drawing. One wonders whether the remarkably lively representations of reality which astonish and delight us in the work of our infants and juniors would be understood by many Soviet teachers. Yet these works, full of acute observation and cheerful, fierce vigour, reflect the child's feelings and reactions to life experience with force and urgency enhanced by the primitive drawing and meaningful distortions used. They are more truly realistic than dull would-be adult imitative drawings induced by too early teaching of academic modes of expressing reality.

However, everything depends on the teacher, and it is clear from the works by older children illustrated that while some teachers, in their efforts to teach realistic drawing, have succeeded only in imparting a commonplace vision to their pupils, others with more sensibility have taught theirs to use their eyes, to be painterly, selective and sensitive to colour and form. The portrait and animal drawings are sound and capable and the best work by older pupils in oils, gouache, watercolour and pen and ink is outstanding.

This book will be a valuable addition to the library of every institution concerned with teacher training.

RONALD HORTON.

AN UNSUCCESSFUL INTRODUCTION

The Young Traveller in Russia. Wright W. Miller. (Phoenix House, 10/6.)

TWO imaginary English schoolchildren, Tom and Jean, spend an imaginary eight-month holiday in Russia, travelling

to popular holiday resorts like Yalta in the Crimea, Kislovodsk, the beautiful health spa in the Northern Caucasus, Tbilisi, capital of Georgia, Stalingrad on the Volga and other places listed in the Intourist itinerary.

Ostensibly they stay with a certain Uncle John, an expert mechanical engineer, who speaks perfect Russian, takes no interest in politics and has been allowed by the Soviet Government to represent his firm in Moscow for the past five years. The idea is that the children will live with him, as he knows Russian life so well and the long holiday will give them a real chance to see Russia not only in summer when it is crowded with foreign tourists but also in winter. Living in a private house instead of a hotel should give them many advantages over ordinary visitors. An excellent idea for a travel book for young people interested in geography and the mode of life of various races.

So it was with enthusiasm that I picked up *The Young Traveller in Russia*. The first few pages set the tone. Great-aunt Natasha, who used to drive "in a sleigh to balls in old St. Petersburg", married an Englishman and settled in Cumberland, tells the children that Russia is "ruled entirely by bandits and rascals—*svolochi*". The use of this offensive swear word is tasteless, to put it mildly, but in a book for schoolchildren it is reprehensible. Even a meagre knowledge of Russian would tell Mr. Miller that *svolochi* is a much stronger word than he claims.

By wrapping the Russian holiday in a cloak-and-dagger atmosphere the author liberally injects his preconceived ideas of the sinister and repeats weary clichés about young urchins stealing wallets, poverty of the people and severity of the régime. No young traveller this, but a seasoned reporter who "garners" his "knowledge" from hearsay and opportunely meets the very people who confirm him in his fixed ideas—the English-speaking Siberian whose professor brother disagreed with the "fraud" Lysenko, suffered five years in a labour camp and is now in broken health; the armed sentry behind barbed wires guarding a labour camp in full view of the Leningrad-Moscow railway line; and "non-political" Uncle John's remark that "there are at least several million families in this country who can tell a similar tale or worse".

Occasionally recalling that he is allegedly writing a book for schoolchildren, the author engineers a forced landing near an isolated village so that Tom can stalk bears and wolves ("in the short May nights"!) in the best schoolboy adventure manner. Here, too, the children discover that the peasants in modern Russia are so poor that there is "never any milk—and not often any sugar" for

their tea and it is doubtful "whether most of them here have ever seen chocolate". Uncle John gives a peasant woman 200 roubles and she, overcome at the sight of such untold wealth, "seized his hand and gave it a juicy kiss". She asks for a small, flat cigarette tin because "these people are not only short of belongings; they're always short of anything to put belongings in".

The reader also learns that in Siberia all the industrial towns are closed to foreign visitors and that they have no pencils or paper in their homes. One wonders however they manage to write their mathematical calculations or study at all.

This artificial attempt to fuse fantasy with fact has landed the author on slippery ground. The Intourist sightseeing tours have been taken, but the idea of having the young English travellers seeing Russia in more detail disappears. The result is that *The Young Traveller in Russia* is neither fish nor fowl. Had they really wanted a map of Moscow they would have found it at the Intourist office. I took a party of English tourists to Moscow and Leningrad this summer and we all had maps of these cities. The places of interest are sketchily described and young readers anxious to learn more about Russia will get very little knowledge from this book.

With more schools now introducing Russian into the curriculum, there is a great need for objective and comprehensive travel books. *The Young Traveller in Russia*, with its accent on prohibitive prices ("a month's salary for a good meal"), sinister influences and poverty can only deter travellers. Perhaps that was the real idea!

KATHLEEN TAYLOR.

CO-ED IN MOSCOW

A Room in Moscow. Sally Belfrage. (Andre Deutsch, 1958, 224 pp., 15/-)

BOOKS on the Soviet Union are not, of course, bound to reach a triumphant conclusion either for or against the country's political system. Miss Belfrage's book, however, which pretends to be something more than a travelogue, seems lacking in judgment of any kind. The author is full of worthy ideas about the "niceness" of people everywhere, but her approach to society and politics is quite anarchistic.

She worked in Moscow for five months, but her attitude to her job at the publishing house is selfish. Its only value in her eyes is that it allows her to stay in Moscow with plenty of free time and a living wage. She chooses her friends in the main

among the Moscow *stilyagi*—who would be better described as "the Mayfair set" rather than "Teddy boys"—and joins in their irresponsible escapades without first, or even eventually, deciding whether, as a social set, they are to be admired or censured.

In the "foreign game" Miss Belfrage pretends to be or not to be a Russian to suit the occasion. This she does in deference to her friends' claim that their association with a foreigner would arouse the unwelcome attentions of the "omnipresent" security police. When they find they have booked a room for the night in the Ministry of Defence rest home in Leningrad she is a Russian. When her friend accidentally breaks a shop window she speaks in a loud American accent and the militiaman considers it prudent to overlook the incident. And so on. All this seems very exciting on the "student rag" level; and yet I believe that Miss Belfrage herself had an uncomfortable feeling that this was not a very serious way to approach the question with which her book is obsessed: were there, are there, "knocks at the door at three in the morning" or not? At the beginning of her stay she was genuinely confused; at the end she seems no wiser.

There still is, undoubtedly, an aftermath in Soviet life of the bad period of unjust imprisonment and denunciation. There is a tendency to interfere in people's personal lives, as much on the part of fellow citizens as of officials; and there is a lack of boldness in speaking out and criticising. But there is also, especially among young people, a tendency to dramatise these things. It was scarcely responsible of Miss Belfrage to allow herself to become the focal point of such adventures. Besides, swept away by the exciting possibilities of spies and counter-revolutionaries, she fails to appreciate a serious social problem, of which her friends are a symptom.

It is a pity Miss Belfrage had such a limited circle of friends, for she has a vivid way of describing the people and things she saw in Moscow. Her style is forceful, though inconsistent: she breaks into it with schoolgirl slang, but, happily, she avoids the pitfall for a young writer of striving too much after effect. Some of her impressions are beautifully short and flippant, and her humour is boisterous. Shopping, the Moscow skyline, a meeting at the publishing house, getting paid and getting on an overcrowded bus are still new and interesting information for most English readers. The book would, however, have been much more interesting if Miss Belfrage had given us a more critical account of her experiences in Moscow.

J.M.W.

AN AMERICAN ON RUSSIA

Inside Russia Today. John Gunther. (Hamish Hamilton, 1958, 591 pp., 25/-).

"**H**IS name," Mr. Gunther tells us engagingly, "is pronounced correctly 'Crew-shove', with a light accent on the 'shove'. . . . If he were Ukrainian, the pronunciation would be 'Crew-shef'." Quaintly inaccurate statements of this kind crop up from time to time in the mass of information and anecdote about modern Russia which Mr. Gunther energetically thrusts at us in his large book. But the number of factual errors is surprisingly small, especially in view of the fact that the author is not himself a professional expert on the Soviet Union (though he had the aid of "Russian experts G., V., and G.G."), to whom the book is "dedicated with love").

In any case the value of the book must not be assessed by the percentage of mistakes it contains. It is written by an American to whom Communism and the Soviet way of life are alien, but it is an honest and candid book by a shrewd and skilled observer. Mr. Gunther makes his approach clear at the outset:

"My point of view is quite simple; that it is high time that we in America accept the facts of life, and, no matter how distasteful and repugnant we find Soviet institutions, adjust ourselves to the necessity of having to live in a world side by side with them."

This is an attitude to the Russian question which would have been highly unpopular in the United States a few years ago; many influential Americans still do not accept it today. Gunther's book has a huge United States circulation, and it was previously serialised in *Life*. It will undoubtedly do a great deal to break down the misunderstanding and misinformation about Russia and her intentions which are widespread in the United States (and to a lesser extent in this country); indeed, it is a pity that equally informative books about the United States are not as yet on mass sale in the Soviet Union.

Mr. Gunther gives full weight to the vitality, toughness and peaceful aspirations of the Russian people, and to the industrial and educational progress which the *élan* of the Soviet system has made possible. He is less well-informed and less unprejudiced about Soviet thought and Soviet attitudes to democracy and liberty. But he is a firm advocate of greater exchange of people and ideas between America and Russia, and one of the products of this intercourse is likely to be a more sympathetic understanding by each country of the other's attitude to social and individual freedom. We in Britain could do much more than we do to foster such understanding.

R. W. DAVIES.

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VIRGIN SOIL

Soviet Kazakhstan. P. Alampiev. (FLPH, 185 pp., unpriced.)

SHORT, well translated, easily read and thick with very attractive illustrations, this small book on Soviet Kazakhstan is brimful of big ideas.

Here is described the breath-taking advance of 8½ million people from extreme backwardness to a modern economy, within about a generation.

Fascinating also are the facts of the recent development of Kazakhstan's mineral resources—coal, copper, gold, lead, zinc, silver, tin, aluminium, oil and raw chemical materials—which, as well as strengthening her own economy, has strengthened that of the USSR as a whole.

Reading the book, one feels that the advances described are only the beginning. For such a land, with its immense resources, enormous distances, vast areas of cultivable land, terrific possibilities of crop adaptation and of influencing climate, its sparse population and still limited transport facilities, the real future lies in modern methods, large-scale mechanisation, big imaginative planning, backed by powerful resources, all of which are possible only in a socialist system.

Such a future, one feels, is symbolised by the account of the virgin and fallow land settlement scheme in the steppes of Kazakhstan, a scheme involving over 50 million acres of new lands, gigantic state farms of 50-70 thousand acres, masses of most up-to-date equipment, the movement and settlement of tens of thousands of people and the building up from scratch of new villages and towns by the dozen.

An interesting book about an interesting part of a very interesting country.

ARTHUR TAYLOR.

THE SOVIET BUDGET

The Development of the Soviet Budgetary System. R. W. Davies; with a foreword by Prof. A. Baykov. (CUP, 1958, 372 pp., 45/-)

DR. DAVIES'S book is the first in English to discuss the Soviet budget as a distinctive part of the whole financial system. His grasp of the extensive, mainly documentary, material is impressive and he keeps a careful check on what is relevant to the explanation of his subject.

He traces the development of the budgetary system from the early days of power, when the Bolsheviks, faced with economic chaos and equipped with little or no financial theory, started to work out a budget which initially took over the old forms, but which, as a result of experience and discussion, they reconstructed to meet the needs of a planned society. He draws an exciting picture of

the struggle to draw up a budget capable of carrying out the important task, stressed by Prof. Baykov in his preface, of financing the economy, principally through investment in heavy industry.

Throughout his book Dr. Davies gives a general idea of the economic situation of the period under discussion, then makes a detailed analysis of budgetary measures and discusses the problems involved. The excellent clarity of his text is marred, at least for the general reader, by the prolific insertion of footnotes, sometimes as many as two to a sentence. This is, of course, a difficult problem in a book which is intended for experts primarily interested in references. However, everyone will welcome the first footnote on page 15.

The writer has a practical approach to his subject, for he is intent on pointing out the usefulness of Soviet experience in working out a direct planning system in any country. This is particularly true, I believe, in the case of underdeveloped countries, where not only is the need for foreign experience greater, but where conditions are also often very similar to those which are usually labelled "specifically Russian".

Dr. Davies includes a separate chapter on local and republican budgets. At the end of his book, finished in March 1956, he makes many proposals in favour of decentralisation, and it is interesting to

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compare these with what has been achieved in this direction since May 1957.

This book is beautifully produced, with well set out tables and index; his bibliography is apparently exhaustive.

J.M.W.

continues his valuable publication of the letters just mentioned, with a batch from June 1626 to August 1634. They deal with business matters, English officers in the Tsar's service, and a Russian student at Cambridge.

A.R.

SLAVONIC STUDIES

Oxford Slavonic Papers, Vol. VIII. (Clarendon Press: OUP, 1958, 166 pp., 18/-)

PROFESSOR D. P. Costello contributes a paper on the murder of Griboyedov, the great Russian dramatist and Minister to Persia in 1829, to the latest issue of this learned publication, with many quotations from British, Russian and other diplomatic correspondence. An agreeable precedent established last year is followed up by an article on English plays in St. Petersburg in the 1760s and 1770s from the pen of the professor of Russian literature at the University of Leningrad, Mr. P. N. Berkov: Shakespeare, Farquhar and Steele were among the dramatists presented (in English) at the "New English Theatre" in 1771 and 1772. Dr. Unbegaun gives an account of four Russian grammars written by or for foreigners before Lomonosov's first grammar in Russian—*Rossiiskaya Grammatika*; and Dr. Veronica Du Feu provides some observations on the vocabulary of the letters sent by the first Romanov Tsar and his father, the patriarch Filaret, to James I and Charles I. Thus the main bias of this number is towards literary history and philology. However, Professor Kononov

FOR STUDENTS

Bondar's Russian Readers, Nos. 1 and 4. (Pitman, 4/- and 4/6.)

A NEW edition of any Russian reader is welcomed by the teacher of the language, whose literature is as yet poorly represented in this genre designed for the student. Bondar's annotated and accented reader of Pushkin's *Queen of Spades* and Tolstoy's *Family Happiness* Part 2 have recently been reprinted in third and second editions respectively.

In the preface to Pushkin's *Queen of Spades* the editor himself points out that the object of the reader is to offer the student the opportunity to read masterpieces in the original so that "he may advance by easy stages from the lowlands to the highlands of Russian literature". This in itself is an admirable function and also self-evident. In this the two readers do succeed; for in the small soft-back editions are presented well-set-out and accented (with only a few misprints) examples of the work of two great Russian authors.

The function of a reader, however, does not end here. Its function is broader, more difficult to fulfil, and it is here that Mr. Bondar's editions often slip up. The reader should provide a good, adequate vocabulary, grammatical explanations, a translation of all idiomatic expressions and alternatives and, above all, an introduction.

Taking these last points into account with reference to these readers produces ample criticism. Criticism in this field is not unfair, for it is only through criticism that the imperative standard of perfection can be attained.

The readers are set out much as before. The vocabulary runs parallel to the text, and this is without doubt the best way; but Mr. Bondar seems to dismiss the possibility of a student not referring to every word he reads in the vocabulary, and consequently the more advanced student loses time seeking unnumbered, unmarked words in a list. There are also some serious mistakes in translation which have been overlooked in these "revised" editions.

The grammatical explanations are quite adequate, though it may be a good idea to add infinitives immediately after the verbs in the vocabulary index besides the verb references at the back of each book. On the other hand the list of idiomatic

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NOTE

All FLPH translations reviewed above are available on loan from the SCR Library.

expressions is far from sufficient. An introduction giving several ideas as to the language and style of the texts has been completely omitted. This is a loss.

However, the overall impression gained of the readers is good, and were the details taken into account Bondar's Russian Readers might rank in a class of their own as the first thorough and comprehensive readers of Russian literature, which are urgently required by the fast-growing contingents of Russian students.

E. J. TIDMARSH.

PHONETICALLY SPEAKING

Russian Pronunciation. Dennis Ward, M.A.
(Oliver & Boyd, 1958, 90 pp., 12/6.)

MR. WARD'S book strikes one as being very odd, not because of his desire to speak fluent Russian—and he speaks it like a native—nor because his book is intended for a limited category of people, but because he has invented a perfectly unnecessary, complicated and inconsistent “Cyrillic phonetic alphabet”. He has done this by revaluing the existing Russian alphabet, the phonetic rules of which have been perfectly well explained in the standard grammar used at the University of London.

This alphabet certainly needs to be explained by a teacher who has himself thoroughly mastered the rules of phonetic pronunciation of the existing Cyrillic alphabet with all its great variety of sounds.

It is quite possible that Mr. Ward himself has attained perfection in Russian with the help, direct or indirect, of this same grammar, since the author, herself a native of Russia, has been teaching Russian in Edinburgh for about forty years. This may also be the reason why Edinburgh leads the country in the attention it pays to the study of Russian.

Mr. Ward could not have invented his new “Cyrillic phonetic alphabet” without knowing all the phonetic rules of the existing alphabet and how to put them into practice. He does not mention how he managed to do this, but he does say that anyone who wishes to study his new alphabet should already have mastered the Russian language and grammar.

What is new and highly commendable is the detailed advice he gives on the preliminary work necessary to a study of the Russian language—or any other foreign language. He advises the reader first to become conscious of his own pronunciation and organs of speech.

The main value of his advice is the way in which he tackles the shyness and self-consciousness of English people. He suggests that the phonetic sounds be practised in the absence of one's friends—and teachers.

Nearly all vowels in English are diphthongs, and it is important to distinguish the pure Russian vowels contained in them and to repeat them constantly. The mouth, tongue, lips, breath, etc., must be closely observed in action and the reader is advised to have no other witnesses of the ensuing gymnastics than a looking-glass, his hand, a cigarette for the smoker and, naturally, his ear with which to check his work. He gives a number of English words as an exercise and explains in detail how to proceed.

But why has Mr. Ward written his book only for those British people who speak English Received Pronunciation or who speak with a Scottish accent? This is apparently because in constructing his phonetic alphabet he has to rely solely on English R.P.

The difficulties in using his alphabet are revealed in practice due to omissions of sound either in spelling or in fluent speech. This is a very individual affair and depends to a great extent on the context and the speaker's mentality, for which no rules can be established. There is such immense variety in Russian, which is a rich language with very few conventional phrases, that it would be much better to live among Russians in order to understand their mentality and therefore variety in speech.

In the long run Mr. Ward's phonetic system may prove to have been a waste of time and energy. It must be remembered that he himself spoke perfect Russian before working out his alphabet, which certainly must have cost him many hours of strenuous work. But perhaps this book is meant to be a guide for changing English spelling!

E. TCHEREMISSINOF.

BALLERINA IN MOSCOW

Red Curtain Up. Beryl Grey. (Secker and Warburg, 1958, 82 pp., 30/-.)

MISS BERYL GREY'S book is of absorbing interest. Apart from being a fascinating account of her tour in the USSR, it is a most valuable contribution to ballet aesthetics. One of its great merits is sincerity.

She has described the differences between the Russian and western schools by giving an expert analysis of the most important elements of technique in the service of artistic expression. Work with Soviet dancers too helped her to make a correct appraisal of their general style.

She gives interesting sketches of some leading Soviet ballet artists, incidentally mentioning their humility—a quality she possesses herself. No sincere and understanding ballet lover can disagree with her observations about the art of dancing, but one may fail to appreciate the last eight words of the following phrase referring to

costumes, and doubt whether there is not a misprint: "In Russia the majority of costumes seemed very light and flowed beautifully, without hindering movement and without showing the line of the body."*

Another dubious statement made by Miss Grey is that Vladimir Rindin is known for his decor for *Romeo and Juliet*. The one seen in London was by Professor P. Williams.

In writing about pleasant or disappointing experiences of everyday life she is just as impartial as in discussing professional subjects, and often reveals a sense of humour. She also describes several amusing incidents, such as ordering English dishes in a foreign country.

Summing up her visit, she quotes the ballet mistress at Leningrad, who introduced herself by saying: "I can't speak English, but we have a common language." Miss Grey says she was very proud to go to Russia and speak that language in her English accent. Actually her accent has acquired a slight Russian intonation in addition to her own. It is necessary to observe this because in song, music and dances intonation colours sound and movement by nuances of feeling, conveying the meaning of phrases. Without intonation interpretation is mechanical.

V.K.

* My italics.

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

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AMONG the new releases of Soviet records by Collet's are two memorable records by the pianist S. Richter. Those who saw the film *The Life of Glinka* will not have forgotten his electric performance as Liszt. One felt one was seeing and hearing Liszt himself. So it is in the recording of Rachmaninov's First Piano Concerto (D2542 10in. LP, 28/8). It is as though the composer-virtuoso were recreating the work himself. The performance is breathlessly brilliant and movingly sincere. No wonder Richter's name is being mentioned ever more frequently as the greatest pianist of the day.

The other record is of Bach's Concerto in D minor for keyboard and strings (D2687 10in. LP, 28/8). In this country preference is now given to keyboard instruments other than the pianoforte in the performance of Bach's concertos, but for those who can adjust themselves to the actual sounds produced by the pianoforte in such music this is a version to be heartily recommended. It is a measure of the musicianship of Richter that he can move from the lush romanticism of Rachmaninov to the severe discipline of Bach's keyboard style with apparently effortless ease. The integrity of his playing is complete. In both works he is accompanied by

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Kurt Zanderling conducting the USSR State Symphony Orchestra (Bach) and the State Radio Symphony Orchestra (Rachmaninov). The recording is not good, but, although the piano tone is shallow and the orchestra dry and lacking in resonance and range, it is adequate to convey the mastery of the performance. It is only fair to readers to add that these two works are now available on a single English twelve-inch disc.

Poor recording mars the pleasure of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet Ballet Suite No. 2* (D522/3 10in. LP, 28/8) played by the Leningrad Symphony Orchestra conducted by E. M. Mravinsky. This, however, is of interest for the music, since it contains some parts of the score not frequently heard.

Another record in which interest centres on the soloists is D3962 (10in. LP, 28/8). Each side is devoted to pieces played by participants in the sixth World Youth Festival, which reveals the astonishing quality of the rising generation of Soviet virtuosi—in this case both women. On one side Z. Shikhmurzaeva (violin) plays four competition pieces with a full round tone and polished assurance. The recording is kind and conveys a vivid impression of the performance. On the other side G. Mieserova (piano) plays two etudes and the *Fantasia-Impromptu* op. 66 by Chopin and the *Khachaturian's Toccata*. The recording is only just adequate, but this is a performance to enjoy and to note for the future. This record will be of great interest to those who like "spotting winners" before international reputations are firmly established.

At the other end of the scale is an artist, two records of whom are now re-issued. This is N. Obukhova. Although these recordings are by no means new, it is a pleasure to be able to take the opportunity of the reissues to pay tribute to one of the greatest Soviet performers. It is our loss that we shall probably never hear her now in person in this country, but any record enthusiast would do well to obtain specimens of her art. The two records here mentioned (10in. 78 r.p.m. 14756/4 and 5581/4, 6/4½ each) are not outstanding musically, but show off her voice to excellent effect. Perhaps one of Obukhova's failings has been a tendency to record too much trivial music. Of the present songs the best is *Akh kogda b ya prezhe znala*, a traditional song arranged by Glinka (14756).

Among the popular records 17017/8 (10in. 78 r.p.m. 6/4½) may be taken as typical. It contains two "Armenian folk songs" expertly performed by the Armenian Folk Song and Dance Ensemble conducted by T. Altunian. Whether they are what we should call folk songs, arranged for western ears, or popular modern songs, the present writer will not

presume to say. It is a fault of Soviet records that the labels give far too little information to assist the listener to an understanding of just what he is hearing.

One other record received deserves mention. It is of two stories by Chekhov rendered by I. Moskvina (10in. 78 LP, 173/4). The stories are (as given on the label) *The Malefactor* and *Horse Name*. Apart from a rather intrusive "pre-echo", these should be of value to students of Russian language and literature.

D.T.R.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Four Lives. N. Adamyan. (FLPH, unpriced.)

The Bewitched Tailor. S. Aleikhem. (FLPH, unpriced.)

The Great Fair. S. Aleichem. (Vision Press, 25/-)

Steep Paths. V. Ananyan. (FLPH, unpriced.)

Ukrainian-English Dictionary. Andriysyshen. (Toronto UP, 96/-)

Shadowed Paths. Ivan Bunin. (FLPH, unpriced.)

The Kola Run. Campbell and Macintyre. (Muller, 25/-)

Doctor at Stalingrad. H. Dibold. (Hutchinson, 16/-)

My Uncle's Dream (7/6); **White Nights; Poor Folk; Notes from a Dead House.** F. Dostoevsky. (FLPH, unpriced.)

Sanatorium Arktur. K. Fedin. (FLPH, unpriced.)

Palace and Prison. O. Forsh. (FLPH, unpriced.)

Literary Portraits. M. Gorky. (FLPH, unpriced.)

Early Dawn. Lev Kassil. (FLPH, unpriced.)

Small Farm in the Steppes. V. Katayev. Lawrence & Wishart, 15/-)

The Soviet Cultural Scene. Lacqueur and Lichtheim. (Atlantic Books, 27/6.)

A Person from England. F. Maclean. (J. Cape, 21/-)

Zdravstvui, Mir. Ed. I. Maisky. (Children's Literature Publishing House, unpriced.)

Surikov. N. Mashkovtsev. (FLPH, unpriced.)

Modern Russian Historiography. A. Mazour. (Van Nostrand, 49/-)

Cruelty. P. Nilin. (FLPH, unpriced.)

Sannikov Land. V. Obruchev. (FLPH, unpriced.)

Hail Life. N. Ostrovsky. (FLPH, 3/-)

Film Technique and Film Acting. V. Pudovkin. (Vision & Mayflower, 50/-)

A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow. A. N. Radishchev. (Harvard UP, 48/-)

Judas Golovyov. Saltykov-Shchedrin. (FLPH, unpriced.)

Tales. Saltykov-Shchedrin. (FLPH, 5/-)

- Stalingrad.** H. Schroter. (M. Joseph, 25/-.)
- The Iron Flood.** A. Serafimovich. (FLPH, 5/-.)
- Outline of Russian Literature.** M. Slonim. (O.U.P., 7/6.)
- My Life in Art.** Stanislavsky. (FLPH, unpriced.)
- Plays and Stories.** A. Tchekov. (Dent, 8/6.)
- Resurrection.** Leo Tolstoi. (FLPH, unpriced.)
- Wings over the Arctic.** M. Vodopyanov. (FLPH, unpriced.)
- Early Soviet Writers.** V. Zavalishin. (Atlantic Books, 63/-.)
- Russians in the Arctic.** Dr. T. Armstrong. (Methuen, 22/6.)
- Twilight of Imperial Russia.** R. Charques. (Phoenix House, 25/-.)
- Soviet Co-operatives.** I. Friedman. (Soviet Weekly Booklet, 6d.)
- Home Book of Russian Cookery.** Nina and G. J. Froud. (Faber and Faber, 16/-.)
- The Decision to Intervene.** Soviet-American Relations, Vol. II. G. Kennan. (Faber, 50/-.)
- Angliiskaya Burzhuaznaya Revolyutsiya** (English Bourgeois Revolution). V. M. Lavrovsky and M. A. Barg. (Izd. Sots-ekon. Lit., 12 r 70k.)
- The Russian Revolution.** A. Moorehead. (Collins, 30/-.)
- The Munich Conspiracy.** A. Rothstein. (Lawrence & Wishart, 36/-.)
- The Soviet Navy.** Ed. M. G. Saunders. (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 36/-.)
- Heroes of Brest Fortress.** S. Smirnov. (FLPH, unpriced.)
- In Common They Fought: Facts, Documents and Essays.** Ed. M. Vistinetsky. (FLPH, unpriced.)
- Cultural Progress in the USSR: Statistical Returns.** (FLPH, unpriced.)
- Soviet Proposals on Disarmament at the 13th Session of UNO, September 1958.** (Soviet News Booklet No. 39, 3d.)
- Soviet Union in Facts and Figures, 1958.** (Soviet News, 5/-.)
- Economy of the Soviet Union, Past and Present.** D. G. Zhimerin. (FLPH, unpriced.)
- Parnassus of a Small Nation.** W. K. Matthews and A. Slodnjak. (Calder, 12/-.)

NEW SCR INFORMATION BULLETINS

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Some New Features in Soviet Education: Editorial; What Our School Should Be Like, a conference discussion; Thoughts on School Reorganisation, by Prof. N. Verzilin; Secondary School Leavers and Work, by G. Sotnikov; Problems of Training Young Specialists, by S. Seryegin; Teaching English in Soviet Schools, by O. B. Shakh-ray.

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DOCUMENTS

Letter from Members of the Editorial Board of *Novy Mir* to Boris Pasternak

Below we publish extracts from the letter sent to Boris Pasternak in September 1956 by members of the Editorial Board of the literary journal *Novy Mir*, published by the Union of Soviet Writers, explaining their reasons for not accepting his novel *Dr. Zhivago* for publication in their journal. The letter is a closely reasoned document of some 10,000 words in length, copiously illustrated with quotations from the novel itself. Our extracts come from the beginning and the end and give the essence of the writers' objections to the novel and disagreement with Pasternak. A translation of the full text has been published by *Soviet News*.

Boris Leonidovich!

We, who now write this letter to you, have read the manuscript of your novel *Doctor Zhivago* which you submitted to *Novy Mir*, and we want to tell you frankly all the thoughts which have come to mind as we read it. These thoughts are both disturbing and painful.

If it were merely a question of "did we like it or not", of appraisals based on taste, or even of sharp, yet purely artistic, differences of opinion, we realise that aesthetic squabbles might not interest you. "Yea" or "Nay", you might say. "The journal has rejected my manuscript—so much the worse for the journal; but the author adheres to his own opinion as to its literary merits."

In the present case, however, the matter is more complicated. What disturbs us about your novel is something quite different, something neither the editors nor the author are in a position to alter by cutting or revising parts of the novel: we refer to the whole spirit of the novel, its emotional appeal, and its author's outlook on life, either actual or, at least, as it appears to the reader. We feel it our bounden duty to discuss this with you, as people you may or may not listen to, but whose collective opinion you have no reason to consider biased, so that there is some point, at least, in listening to it.

The spirit of your novel is one of non-acceptance of the socialist revolution. The emotional appeal of your novel is the assertion that the October Revolution, the Civil War, and the subsequent social changes connected with them, brought the people nothing but suffering, and destroyed the Russian intelligentsia physically or morally. The author's views on the past of our country and, in particular, on the first decade after the October Revolution (for, with the exception of the epilogue, the novel finishes at the end of that decade), as they emerge from the

pages of his novel, lead to the conclusion that the October Revolution was a mistake, that participation in it by that section of the intelligentsia which supported it was an irreparable disaster, and that everything which happened subsequently was evil.

People who, in the past, have read your 1905, *Lieutenant Schmidt*, *Second Birth*, *The Waves* and *On Early Trains*—poems which seemed, to us at least, to possess a different spirit, a different emotional appeal—were painfully surprised on reading your novel.

We believe that we are not mistaken when we say that the story of the life and death of Doctor Zhivago is also, in your view, the story of the life and death of the Russian intelligentsia, of its path in the revolution and through the revolution and of its destruction as a result of the revolution.

In the novel there is a clearly visible dividing line which cuts across your own division of the novel into two parts and which comes roughly at the end of the first third of the novel. This dividing line is the year 1917, which separates what was expected to happen and what actually happened. Up until this dividing line the characters in your novel were waiting for something which did not happen and beyond this dividing line things began to happen which they did not expect, which they did not want and which, in your view, brought them to physical and moral destruction.

The first third of your novel, on the twenty years preceding the revolution, does not as yet contain any clearly expressed non-acceptance of the approaching revolution. But we believe that the germ of this non-acceptance is there already. Farther on, when you begin to describe the revolution which has taken place, your views crystallise into an outlook which is more consistent, straightforward and wholehearted in its non-

acceptance of the revolution. In the first third of the novel, however, these views are still contradictory: on the one hand, you abstractly and declaredly recognise that the world of bourgeois property and bourgeois inequality is unjust and not only reject it as an ideal, but consider it unacceptable to mankind in the future. However, once you have passed from the general declaration to describing life, to people, then these people—both the masters in this unjust bourgeois life and their intellectual servants, who work to preserve what you have declaredly recognised to be injustice—all of them with rare exceptions, such as the rogue Komarovskiy, appear as the finest, kindest, nicest people, who do good, turn this way and that, suffer and are incapable of hurting a fly.

This whole world of pre-revolutionary bourgeois Russia, which you declaredly reject in general terms, once the question arises of describing it concretely in practice, becomes fully acceptable to you—even painfully dear to you as the author. The only unacceptable thing in that world is a certain general injustice through exploitation and inequality, always kept in the background, while everything that takes place in the limelight appears in the end to be quite idyllic: the capitalists make donations to the revolution and live honestly, the intelligentsia enjoy full spiritual freedom and independence of thought regardless of the bureaucratic machine of the czarist régime, poor girls find rich, disinterested protectors, while the sons of factory hands and hall-porters obtain an education without difficulty.

In general the characters of the novel live well and justly, some of them want to live even better and even more justly—and that, essentially, is the greatest extent to which they share in looking forward to the revolution.

Of the actual situation of the country and of the people nothing is said in the novel, nor is there any indication why a revolution in Russia had become inevitable or what unbearable suffering and social injustice drove the people to this revolution.

The majority of the characters of this novel—whom the author has lovingly imbued with a part of his own spirit—are people accustomed to living in an atmosphere of talk about revolution, but for none of them had the revolution become a necessity. They loved to talk about it in one way or another, but they could exist very well without it; not only was there nothing unbearable in their life before the revolution, but there was virtually nothing that spoiled their lives, even on the spiritual level. And there are no other people in the novel (to speak of people who have the author's sympathy, and are drawn with a comparable measure of depth and detail).

As for the common people who are declared to be suffering in the background—in the first third of the novel they are an unknown, conjectured quantity, and the author's real attitude to this unknown element only becomes clear when the revolution takes place and these people go into action.

The first third of the novel is above all the story of a few gifted individuals who live a many-sided intellectual life, and concentrate in the main on the problem of their own spiritual existence. One of these gifted individuals—Nikolai Nikolaevich—says at the very beginning of the novel that “It is always a sign of mediocrity in people when they herd together, whether their group loyalty is to Solov'yev or to Kant or to Marx. The truth is only sought by individuals, and they break with those who do not love it enough. How many things in the world deserve our loyalty? Very few indeed.”

In its context this passage refers to Nikolai Nikolaevich's god-seeking; but from the second third of the novel onwards we see how it gradually becomes a condensed expression of the author's attitude both to the people and to the revolutionary movement.

Then at last the revolution comes, or rather pounces. It pounces on the characters in your novel unexpectedly because, no matter how much they may have talked about it in advance, they were not really expecting it, and its reality filled them with consternation. With regard to the way the revolution comes into your novel, it is difficult even to distinguish the February Revolution from that of October. In the novel the year 1917 seems to be taken as a whole, in general, during which time at first everything changed, the former life of your characters, “individuals, seeking the truth”, was not yet destroyed so abruptly and so noticeably, but then things began to change more and more, more abruptly and more swiftly: Their life became more and more dependent on the immense, unprecedented events taking place in the country, and the greater their dependence the more embittered they became and the more they regretted what had happened.

In theory it is difficult to imagine a novel in which many chapters are devoted to 1917, but in which at the same time the February and October revolutions do not exist as such, and in which there is no definite appraisal of any kind of the social difference between the two.

In theory this is difficult to imagine, but in practice that is exactly how things stand in your novel! It is difficult to imagine that first the February Revolution, and then the October Revolution, which divided so many people into different camps precisely at these turning points, would not have determined the standpoint of the characters of a novel

written about that period. It is difficult to imagine that people living a spiritual life and occupying a definite position in society would not at such a time have defined their attitude one way or another to such events as the overthrow of the autocracy, the coming to power of Kerensky, the July events, the Kornilov rebellion, the October uprising, the seizure of power by the Soviets and the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly.

Incidentally, in the novel the characters do not talk about any of these things directly, and do not make a straightforward estimation of the events through which the country was living at the time. One might say, of course, that the author simply did not want to call things by their proper names, that he did not want to make a straightforward estimation either of his own or through his characters, and perhaps this is partly true, but it seems to us that the whole truth lies deeper than this partial explanation. The truth, in our opinion, is that the "individuals, seeking truth" in the novel gradually become more and more embittered against the revolution as it proceeds, not because of any non-acceptance of one or other of its concrete forms, such as the October uprising, or the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly, but because of various personal inconveniences which the course of the revolution has brought to them individually.

After all their talk about revolution has been replaced by revolutionary activity taking place in the country independently of them, these "individuals, seeking truth" whom the author initially portrays as people of ideas, or rather as people living in the world of ideas, turn out almost without exception to be people who have not the slightest desire to uphold any idea at all, let alone sacrifice their lives for these ideas, whether they are revolutionary or counter-revolutionary.

Evidently they continue to live a spiritual life somehow or other, but their attitude to the revolution and, above all, their actions are determined with increasing urgency by the degree of personal discomfort the revolution brings them—hunger, cold, cramped living quarters, the disruption of their customary comfortable, well-fed, pre-revolutionary way of life. Indeed, it would be hard to recall a book in which characters who pretend to such lofty spirituality worry and talk so much, and in such momentous years, about food, potatoes, fuel and all kinds of other worldly comforts and discomforts as in your novel.

The characters in your novel, and, in particular, Dr. Zhivago himself and his family, spend the years of the revolution and the civil war seeking relative well-being—repletion and quiet amid all the vicissitudes of the struggle, amid general national ruin. They are not cowards

physically—you as the author stress this fact—yet, at the same time, their sole aim is the preservation of their own lives, and it is for the sake of this above all that they undertake all their principal actions. And it is precisely the fact that in the conditions of the revolution and the civil war this life of theirs cannot be preserved that leads them to still greater exasperation with everything that is taking place. They are not grabbers or gluttons, not excessive lovers of creature comforts; they needed all this not for its own sake, but merely as a basis for the uninterrupted and assured continuance of their spiritual life.

And what kind of life is this? The same as they had previously led, for nothing new enters their spiritual life to change it. The possibility of continuing it as before, without outside interference, seems to them to be the highest value not only for them personally, but for all humanity, and inasmuch as the revolution directly demands from them activity, decisions, and an answer to the question "for or against", they, in self-defence, move from a sense that the revolution is alien to them to a sense of their own hostility to it. . . .

There were people like this, and they were by no means few in number, and our quarrel with you is not whether such people existed, but whether they deserve the unqualified apology that fills your novel. Are they the flower of the Russian intelligentsia in the way you, with all the talent at your disposal, attempt to present Dr. Zhivago, or are they a disease? The appearance of such a disease in the period of stagnation and reaction between the first and second Russian revolutions is quite explicable, but is it worth setting up these people—with their Philistine inactivity in moments of crisis, their social cowardice, their continual evasion of the question "Which side are you on?"—as superior beings, who somehow have the right of objective judgment on everything around them, and in particular on the revolution and the people?

For it is precisely through the mouths of these people, especially through Dr. Zhivago himself, that you attempt to pronounce judgment on everything that has been done in our country, beginning with the October Revolution. Without any exaggeration one is fully justified in saying that you as author accord no one in the novel such unconditional sympathy as Dr. Zhivago and the people who share his views, to such an extent that their dialogue in the majority of cases is more like conversation with yourself. . . .

Your Dr. Zhivago, having safely passed the Scylla and Charybdis of the civil war, dies at the end of the twenties, after losing those who were dear to him, entering into a strange marriage, and becoming thoroughly seedy. Not long before his death, in a conversation with Dudorov

and Gordon (whom you have chosen to make representatives of the old intelligentsia that elected to work with the Soviet government), he gives that intelligentsia his last dying will and testament, in their persons, by finally and viciously spitting in their faces.

What epithets do you not shower here upon your Dr. Zhivago's unfortunate companions! What vengeance would you not wreak upon them because they did not assume the attitude of supermen, but went along with the revolutionary people through all its disasters and trials!

They "were always at a loss for an expression," and "to eke out their vocabulary" they "repeat themselves." They also suffer from "the misfortune of having average taste, (which) is a great deal worse than that of having no taste at all." They are distinguished by "their inability either to think with freedom or to guide the conversation freely", they are "dazzled by the stereotyped nature of their own reasoning", they take "the textbook orthodoxy of (their own) sentiments to be a sign of their common humanity", they are "bigots", they are "men who are not free, idealise their bondage", and so on, and so forth.

And as he listens to what they say, Dr. Zhivago—who in your words "could not bear the political mysticism of the Soviet intelligentsia, though it was the very thing they regarded as the highest of their achievements and described in the language of the day as 'the spiritual top-flight of the age'"—thinks loftily of his friends who went into the service of the Soviet government: "Dear friends, how desperately commonplace you are, **you**, your circle, the names and the authorities you quote, their brilliance and the art you so much admire! The only bright and living thing about you is that you are living at the same time as myself and are my friends."

We advise you to re-read carefully these words you wrote in your novel. It is bad enough that they are comically elevated in tone, but can you really not sense the baseness that is also contained in them? Truth rarely travels in the company of hysterical bad temper, and that is probably why there is so little truth in those pages describing the end of life's road for your Dr. Zhivago and in those of the subsequent epilogue, which seem to us to have been written by a very angry and very hasty hand, so hasty in its anger that it would be hard to consider these pages to be within the province of art.

You are not averse to the use of symbolism, and the death, or rather the dying, of Dr. Zhivago at the end of the 'twenties is for you, we feel, a symbol of the death of the Russian intelligentsia, brought about by the revolution. Yes, one cannot but agree that for the Dr. Zhivago you have depicted in the novel the climate of

revolution is lethal. Our quarrel with you is not on that point, but—as we said at the beginning—on something quite different.

In your scheme of things Dr. Zhivago is the highest spiritual point of the Russian intelligentsia.

In our scheme of things he is its lowest spiritual slough.

In your scheme of things the Russian intelligentsia whose way parts from that of Dr. Zhivago, which went to serve the people, has strayed away from its true purpose, has destroyed itself spiritually, has done nothing of value.

In our scheme of things it has only found its true purpose on that road, has continued to serve the people and to perform for the people exactly the same service as in pre-revolutionary years was performed for it by the best part of the Russian intelligentsia, those who prepared the revolution; something utterly foreign to it then as now was the conscious self-separation from the interests of the people, the ideological splitting off from the people, which is represented by your Dr. Zhivago.

To all that has already been said we must of bitter necessity add a few words about the way the people are depicted in your novel during the years of revolution. This picture, painted most often through the eyes of Zhivago, but sometimes in the author's direct speech, is exceptionally characteristic of the anti-popular spirit of your novel and is in fundamental contradiction to the whole tradition of Russian literature, which has never tried to curry favour with the people, but which has been capable of seeing that people's beauty, and strength, and spiritual richness. The people, as shown in your novel, however, are divided into two categories—good little pilgrims to the holy places, who cling to Dr. Zhivago and those near to him, and half-human, half-bestial creatures personifying the wild force of revolution, or rather of riot and rebellion, to describe it as it appears to your way of thinking. . . .

So far we have said practically nothing about the artistic aspect of your novel. If we are to speak of this, it should be remarked that the general thematic and compositional diffuseness, even scrappiness, of the novel means that the impressions produced by this page or that do not form themselves into a general picture but exist in isolation.

There are many excellently written pages in the novel, principally those where the Russian natural scene has been perceived and re-created by you with an amazingly sure and poetic touch.

There are, too, many frankly feeble pages, devoid of life, desiccated by didacticism. These are specially numerous in the second half of the book.

But we do not wish to dwell on this

aspect, since as we stated in the beginning the essence of our difference with you does not lie in aesthetic disputes. You have written a novel that is extremely political, primarily political, a sermon-novel. You have constructed it as a work quite openly and wholly aimed to serve particular political ends. And this, which has been the main point for you, is also naturally the main centre of attention for us.

Unpleasant though it may be, we have had to call things by their true names in this letter to you. We feel that your novel is deeply unjust, historically unobjective in its portrayal of the revolution, the civil war and the post-revolutionary years, that it is profoundly anti-democratic and bereft of the least understanding of the interests of the people. This, taken as a whole, all follows from your attitude of a man trying to demonstrate in his novel that the October Socialist Revolution, far from being of positive significance in the history of our people and of humanity, on the contrary brought nothing but evil and unhappiness.

As people whose attitude is diametrically opposed to yours, we naturally consider that there can be no question of your novel being published in the pages of *Novy Mir*.

With regard not to your ideological position itself, but to the exasperation with which the novel is written, we wish, remembering that in the past things have come from your pen in which a very great deal is at variance with what you now say, to remark in the words your heroine addresses to Dr. Zhivago: "You have changed. Before you spoke of the revolution not so harshly, without exasperation."

Though of course the exasperation is not the main point, since it is merely the accompaniment to ideas that have been disproved by time, ideas without foundation and condemned to annihilation. If you are still in a position to pause and give thought to this—give it thought. In spite of everything, we would still wish it to be so.

We return you the manuscript of the novel *Dr. Zhivago*.

(signatures) B. Agapov, B. Lavrenev, K. Fedin, K. Simonov, A. Krivitsky.

September 1956.

Literaturnaya Gazeta, October 25, 1958.

Translated by M.M. and R.K.

Letter from Boris Pasternak to the Editors of *Pravda*

To the Editors of "Pravda"

May I ask you to publish this statement in the columns of your paper?

My respect for the truth compels me to make it.

Just as everything that has happened to me has been the natural consequence of my own actions, so have all my state-

ments in regard to the award of the Nobel prize been free and voluntary.

I regarded the award of the Nobel prize as a literary distinction, I was delighted by it and expressed this delight in a telegram to Anders Esterling, the Secretary of the Swedish Academy.

But I was mistaken. I had grounds for being mistaken, since I had previously been nominated to receive it, for example, five years ago, before my novel was written.

By the end of the week, when I saw what vast dimensions the political campaign around my novel had acquired, and had become convinced that the award was a political move, which has now resulted in such monstrous consequences, I on my own conviction, compelled by no one, sent my own voluntary refusal.

In my letter to Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev I declared that I was bound to Russia by my birth, life and work and that it was inconceivable for me to leave my country and become an exile in foreign lands. In speaking of this bond, I meant not only my kinship with the Russian land and countryside, but, of course, also with its people, its past, its glorious present and its future.

However, between me and this bond there arose a wall of obstacles, caused through my own fault by the novel.

I never intended any harm to my state and my people.

The editors of *Novy Mir* warned me that the novel might be understood by readers as a book directed against the October Revolution and the foundations of Soviet society. I did not appreciate this, to my present regret.

Indeed, if the conclusions arising from a critical analysis of the novel are considered, it appears as if I maintained the following erroneous positions in my novel. I am supposed to declare that every revolution is an historically unlawful phenomenon, that the October Revolution is one such unlawful occurrence, that it brought Russia misery and resulted in the destruction of the Russian intelligentsia succeeding to it.

Clearly I cannot subscribe to such absurd statements. Meanwhile my book, which had been awarded the Nobel prize, has occasioned such a regrettable interpretation, and it is for this reason that finally I refused the prize.

If publication of the book had been suspended as I requested my publisher in Italy (the book has been published in other countries without my knowledge), probably I would have succeeded in correcting this, if only partially. However, the book has been published and it is too late to speak of this.

During the course of this eventful week I have not been persecuted; neither my life, my liberty nor anything at all has been in danger. I wish once more to stress

the fact that all my actions have been done voluntarily. People who know me closely know well that nothing in the world could make me dissemble or act against my conscience. So it was on this occasion. There is no need to give an assurance that nobody forced me to do anything, and that I am making this statement of my own free will, with a bright faith in the general, as well as my own personal, future, and with pride in

the times in which I live and in the people around me.

I believe that I shall find strength in myself to restore my good name and the shattered confidence of my friends.

B. Pasternak.

November 5, 1958.

Published in *Pravda*, November 6, 1958.

Translated by J.M.W.



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